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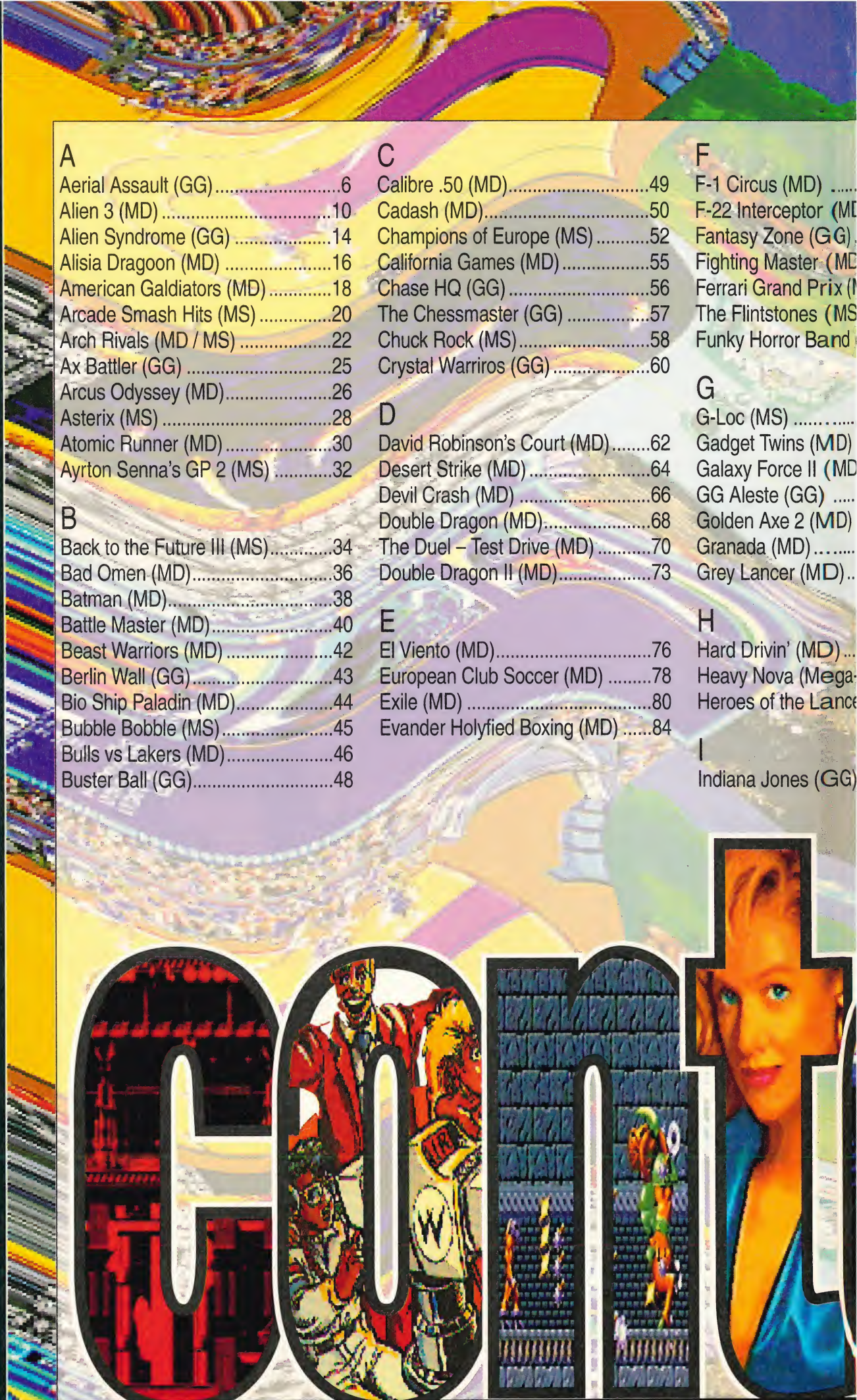
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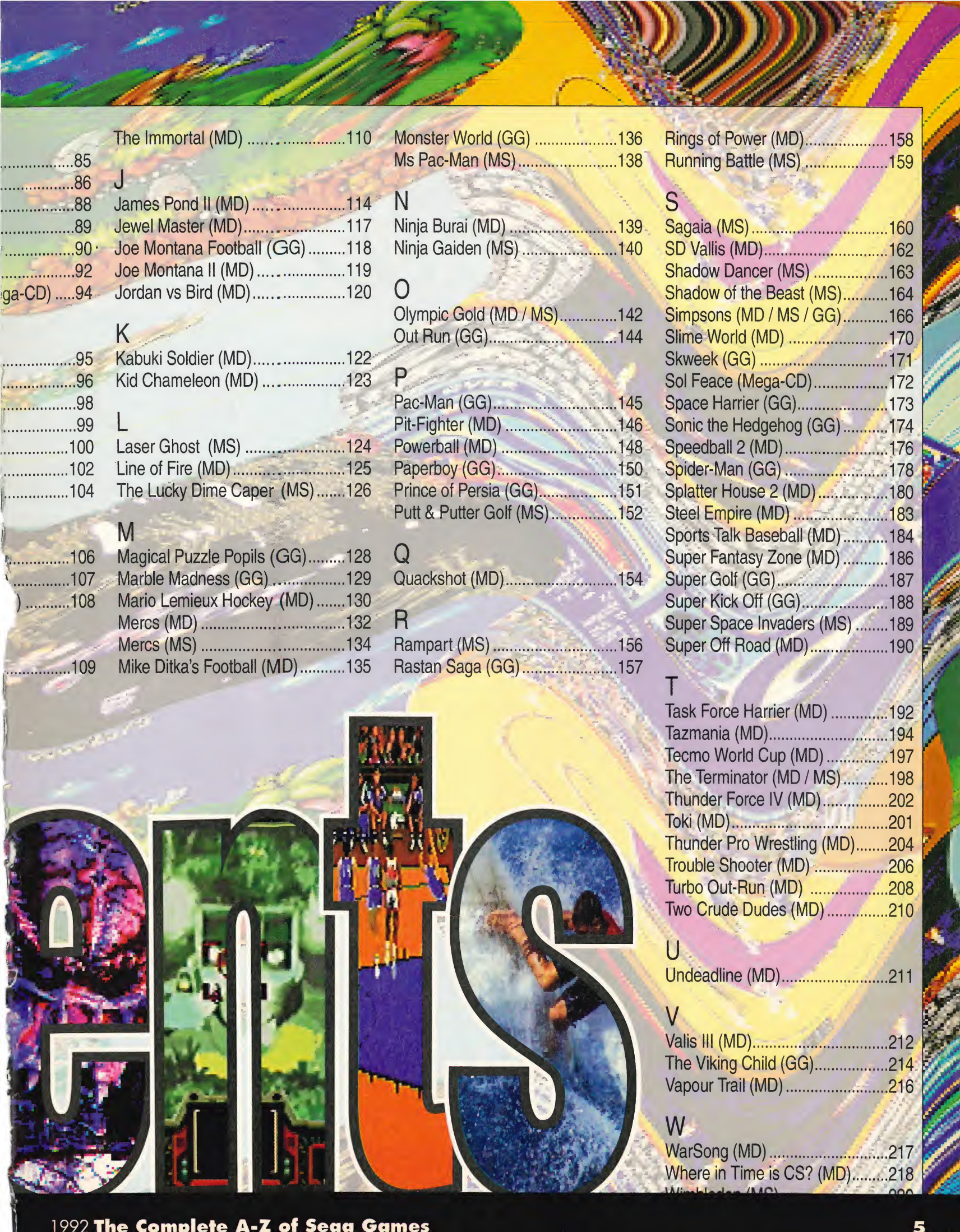
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AERIAL ASSAULT



First things first. You'll be glad to hear that *Aerial Assault* is not a direct port from the Master System, although the changes that have been made cannot save it from being the same mediocre game that the MS version was.

It is good to see that Sega have enhanced the graphics of the Master System version to become larger and more vivid on the small screen. All the aircraft have been taken from small, squat blobs to, er, big squat blobs. As you pass through the levels you will see that there is very little detail or colour used on the enemy planes. In fact, they look as if they have just been blown up from the MS game and not even redesigned for the GG.

With such appallingly disappointing graphics, it's inevitable that the music

is none too hot.

The tune seems to amble along creating no atmosphere or having any influence on the gameplay – for all intents and purposes, it may as well not be there. The sound effects are similar, containing a few explosions that sound really fake through the plastic speaker.

In its favour, *Aerial Assault* is one of the few simultaneous two-player games on the Game Gear (played through the versus cable). Having teamplay is always a good idea, but when you have to sacrifice certain elements of the play (like limiting the moves), it doesn't seem worth it.

Just improving the graphics for the smaller screen, doesn't mean Sega have really adapted this for the handheld. The original came out on the Master System almost two years ago, and since then there have been a lot of changes in shoot-'em-ups – especially with the arrival of games like *GG Aleste* and *Halley Wars*. *Aerial Assault* seems extremely simple compared to these, so why bother?

● Les "Persil" Ellis



Push the envelope as you rise to the outer limits to take out these ozone destroying craft.



The enemy are hiding in these lava fields. Brave the heat and fireballs to take them out.

PROTIP Get the homing missiles as soon as you can. Then just move up and down and keep your finger on fire and your missiles will take out most things before they get to you.

PROFILE AERIAL ASSAULT ● SEGA ● £25 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 4
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES teamplay

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GRAPHICS
▼ No detail on any of the bland aircraft.
▼ Boring, repetitive backdrops. **50**

SOUND
▼ *Aleste* and *Halley Wars* set higher standards.
▼ *Aerial Assault* fails dismally to meet them. **44**

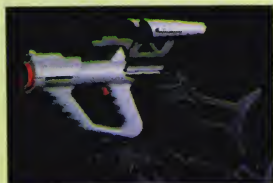
GAMEPLAY
▲ A slight competitive element in the two-player.
▼ Very simple and monotonous to play. **39**

CHALLENGE
▼ Only four levels and they're all too easy.
▼ If saving the world was this easy, we'd all do **36**

A very old formula that fails to excite – don't waste your money.
PROSCORE 42

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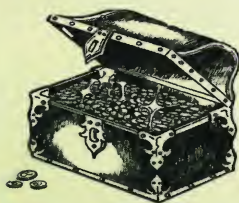
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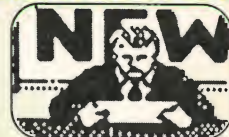
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ALF

Only three Melmacians survived the planetary explosion the fateful day that everyone plugged in their hairdryers at the same time! Alf and his two buddies, Skip and Rhonda, were off-planet at the time looking for a Space Age candy store. Skip and Rhonda landed on Mars, but the Alfer crashed on Earth in the Tanners' backyard. Considering his yen for the perfumed Rhonda, and his home-sickness, it's up to you to help him return to his friends.

Unfortunately, the spaceship was trashed when it crash-landed, and is in need of a total overhaul before you're going anywhere. And if that wasn't enough, the Alien Task Force know you're about, and will stop at nothing to capture you, you smart-mouthed alien furball. Hey, hey, just kidding!



Hidden within the depths of the caves is a small shack. Find it for some pocket money!



Alf's been kicking around Sky TV for some time now, and if you've seen his show you'll understand what I mean when I say you either love him or hate him. Les is a big fan and can reel off all of his "hilarious" catchphrases, but he's not quite my cup of tea. The idea of an alien living with a human family is about as original as "Borrowing Fred McPlagiarism, winner of last year's Mr Copycat competition".

Alf, the game, takes you through five levels of 8-bit "fun" and, unsurprisingly, is about as entertaining as the TV show. Melmac probably self-destructed when it heard the news that this wise-ass alien was coming home! Your objective is to traverse the five areas in search of the items

you'll need to get to the Moon. This is where the repair kit is to be found, which will enable you to get your spaceship up and running.

Graphically, *Alf* is a rather simple affair, with minimal animation and low-resolution, jerky sprites. In fact most of the sprites, if not all of them,



Get your cossie on, we's goin' swimmin'! Watch out for the Alien Task Force though, as they've got frogmen on the case!

PRO TIP

When out gallivanting in the town, stay in the middle of the road. The bikes will skim past without harming you, and the Alien Task Force are far too wimpy to even dare to





THE SHOPPING MALL - buy your alien essentials here. But you'll have to acquire some moolah before you can do this. It must be Trowbridge on a Wednesday afternoon, as almost everything is closed!



Remember, all polite aliens shut doors after they've been through them! You could be penalised for not doing so!

including Alf himself, only have two frames of animation, which, as you can imagine, only accentuates the flickery feel of the game. The backdrops are colourful and fairly well detailed in places, although they give the impression that a rather talentless ten year old drew them (even I could do better – and that's saying something!).

The sound playing through-

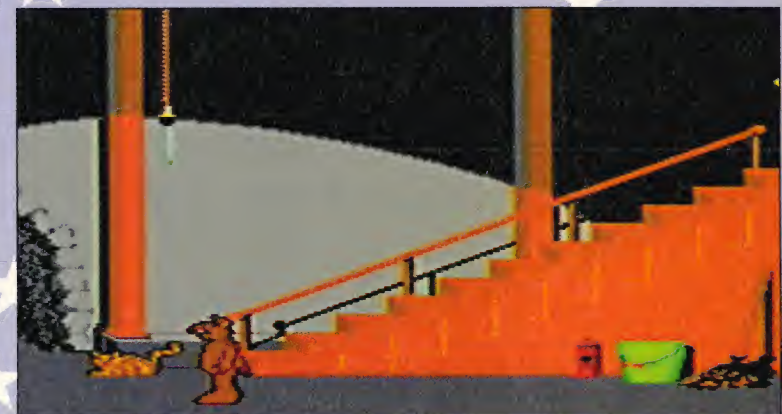
out is reminiscent of a badly-tuned Bontempi organ, and loops itself incessantly throughout, while the sound FX are nowhere to be heard. No, there's not even one!

Alf tries very hard to be a fun game, and there's even a puzzle element involved. You have to know which item to use where, although some of them are used automatically as you enter the correct area. The worst thing about this piece of software is the abysmal collision detection! Even in the good ol' days of the Sinclair Spectrum, things were never this bad! You can be sheer feet away from a bat, for example, and the death sequence initiates itself. (This, in itself, is no feat of programming excellence. All you do is turn black and float skywards!)

On the whole, *Alf* dies a death here, plumb the same joyless depths as *The Flintstones* did before. Cynics will love it, laughing heartily at the overall lack of anything substantial, but anyone looking for a serious Master System game will be severely disappointed. The only other category of gamer that could derive even the slightest pleasure



Ba-doing! Ba-doing! Possibly the most fun you can have while your parents are out! Just make sure you don't get caught at it!



Make sure you're carrying Lucky, the cat, when entering the cellar, otherwise the rat that lives here could prove hazardous. Turn the light on too, or you'll be stumbling around in the dark!

from this game is possibly a sub-normal six year old Alf fan. But then again, Les liked it!

● James "Stuff the alien!" Scullion



PROFILE ALF ● TONKA ● £29.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE	2Mbit	SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	1	Comtazia
STAGES	5	8 Malcheapen Street
SKILL LEVELS	1	Worcester
FEATURES	no gameplay	WR1 2DH
		☎(0905) 723777

GRAPHICS ▲ Lovely choice of colours. ▼ Terrible choice of designer!	15
SOUND ▼ One dodgy tune! ▼ No sound effects!	09
GAMEPLAY ▼ Oh, look at that far off rat! ▼ Ouch, how did that happen?	19
CHALLENGE ▲ Some interesting puzzle ideas. ▼ Not enough varied goals.	42
Spend 30 quid on this and you'll feel a right spaz.	
PROSCORE 16	

MEGA DRIVE

Just when she thought she'd finally got away from the Aliens, Ripley's escape pod crash-lands on the surface of a prison planet. Unfortunately for the planet's residents, one of the Aliens has hitched a ride with her and subsequently has set about investigating its new-found home.

Already, the Aliens have set about impregnating their human hostages. Cocooned and stuck to walls in various parts of the prison, the humans have only one chance of survival: Ripley. Her skill with weapons (although there weren't any in the movie!) and previous experience of fighting the acid-blooded Aliens are the only things that can keep her and everyone else alive. Nobody else can beat the Aliens and rescue the hostages, but time is running out...



A slick intro featuring the Alien egg logo offers up your options screen. Here you can choose the number of tries you have at each mission from one to as many as nine times, select your difficulty settings, button configuration for firing, jumping and weapons selection plus check out the sound test.

The game opens with you controlling Ripley at the top of the underground prison complex. Your arsenal consists of a pulse rifle, flame thrower, grenade launcher and hand grenades. It sounds invincible, but your ammo is limited and, although, there's plenty of ammo and energy power-ups hidden in the complex, you'll be too busy to spend time hunting for it.

PRO TIP



For extra points and to save time, blast through doors with your grenade launcher.

You play against the clock on each mission, even on the big level guardians you meet after every three stages. With only a certain amount of energy and time there's very little room for mistakes. The hostages are



Here's one of the victims you've got to rescue. A quick caress from the hands of Ripley is enough to free the poor chap from his torment! Watch out, though, they're usually quite well protected.

hidden all over the maze-like prison and worker Aliens are everywhere; jumping from the floors and ceilings and wandering the corridors. A motion tracker in the top right corner of your screen will tell you if any are near, but it eats batteries and finding them wastes valuable time. Airdrop crawlways can give you access to other parts of the complex, but provide perfect hiding places for Aliens, who lurk down ladders or drop on you from above. Clearing your path with hand grenades saves your other, more valuable ammo.

Alien³ was developed by Probe, the same team who put together *The Terminator*, and it shows. The game sprites and backgrounds all display the same attention to detail, and the multi-directional scrolling is as smooth as silk. The backgrounds are relatively simple in the early stages, but as you progress things really hot up. From blood-pumping carcasses and gore-smeared walls in the infirmary sections, to the acid-dripping exteriors where face-hugger pods



and Aliens hide in the scenery on the later missions.

The Ripley sprite is well animated, though is not as detailed as the Aliens, whose metallic colour and shading is right out of the movies. Like Reese in *The Terminator*, Ripley's movements are restricted to jumping and climbing, but annoyingly, she can't jump and fire simultaneously, which would have made wasting ceiling-clinging Aliens a doddle. With so many ladders and moving platforms to cope with, you have to be careful how far you jump, too. Drop too far and you'll lose some energy.

EN 3

PRO TIP Check out the bottom of the level where the sliding doors are on stage four. Go right through the wall by the ladder to find a secret room full of goodies!

TIME UP!
YOU FAILED
TO RESCUE
ALL THE
PRISONERS



This level is entitled "Mayhem!" and mayhem it is! Aliens attack you from all quarters, not even giving enough time to let a few rounds off!



Reaching level four, you'll come across this little lovely! She's the guardian to the later levels, and takes no stick from puny humans! Your best bet's the grenade launcher.

IF IT MOVIES, SEQUEL IT

Alien³, directed by David Fincher, follows on from *Aliens* and sees Sigourney Weaver reprising her role as Ripley who crash-lands her escape pod on a prison planet. Unfortunately, Ripley's brought an Alien with her and it quickly starts mashing the prison's inmates. With her comrades dead, and Bishop, the android, a useless wreck, Ripley must convince the inmates of the danger they face and, with no weapons on the prison planet, destroy the Alien with whatever she can find. With or without the inmates' help, Ripley faces the ultimate challenge in what's rumoured to be the final movie in the series.

While we wouldn't want to turn into a bunch of film critics, it's interesting to see how the film press has received this innovative film. In America it was praised for its dark, menacing atmosphere, but the UK's press have criticised the movie for being boring. Personally, we agree with the American press. If you go to see *Alien³* expecting another heavy action film, then you'll be disappointed. The last film in the trilogy is more like the first, with fleeting glances of the Alien and heavy, heavy atmosphere. It's definitely worth checking out.





PROTIP For a Smarmie Charlie Bonus of 50,000, beat 1 min 30 seconds on stage one!

Flicking between weapons is easy, and the only real problem with controlling the Ripley character comes when you try and leave ladders. You have to be really precise, and it's a right pain when the clock's running down, there's an Alien coming at you and you can't get off in time to shoot him! The programmers should have sorted this, but it all adds to the tension. And that's what this game's about.

As platform shooters go, *Alien³* isn't going to make the same splash as *Strider* did all those years ago, but as a movie licence, it more than makes up for *The Terminator's* disappointments. It's a big game with heaps of secret rooms full of power-



You've just reached the planet's surface, and immediately got chomped by an alien. Learn't your lesson yet?

SCORE
26730

1 14



Between each cell or vault lie miles of piping which Ripley can use to get around. Beware, though, as many aliens travel by tube too! Don't believe us? Check out the London Underground anytime!

SCORE
68830

1 14



ups, and stacks to do, especially on the Rescue missions, where you have to free up to 19 hostages against the clock! Unlike *Terminator*, this will take you a while to complete and frustration is neatly offset thanks to the number of tries you can have at each level. The difficulty settings are pitched just right, and, while there may be a few niggles with the control

system, *Alien³* is still a very playable, extremely addictive game that'll keep you coming back for more even after you've beaten it.

● David "hugger" Graham

PROFILE

ALIEN³ ● FLYING EDGE ● £39.99 ● OUT SEPT

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 15
SKILL LEVELS 9
FEATURES continues

SUPPLIER
Acclaim UK
4 Walcote Place
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 9AP

GRAPHICS

▲ Great detail on sprites and backgrounds.
▲ Slick animation and scrolling.

88

SOUND

▲ Atmospheric tunes as you play.
▲ Big spot effects.

87

GAMEPLAY

▲ Good combination platform shoot-'em-up.
▼ Game sprite control could've been better.

83

CHALLENGE

▲ Tough running against the clock.
▲ Heaps to do on each mission.

84

Almost an absolutely fantastic platform shoot-'em-up - almost!

PROSCORE

87

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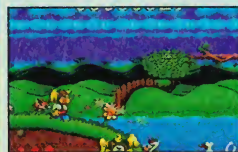
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Evil slime-sucking aliens have invaded and over-ridden the settlement on space colony Alpha. (And they haven't done it in the name of race relations either.) All of the inhabitants have been taken captive yet remain unharmed. The aliens' intentions are obviously hostile as no attempts at communication have been made by them. Your task is to free your lunar brethren before any harm can befall them.

Scattered around the facility are several tools and utilities left over from the construction of the buildings, such as the odd industrial laser or demolition grenade. These can be harnessed by you as weapons, luckily enough, enhancing your death-dealing abilities to new destructive heights. And if you've got any spare time in between splatting ALFs you can also liberate your mates – but that's just a sideline, eh?



Alien Syndrome is a 3-D Gauntlet-style game in that you're looking down on the action from high above. There are four large levels to traverse, replete with foreign life-forms, and each having their own lovable but ugly mutha to contend with at the end.

On power up, you are greeted with a chillingly ominous message from the previous occupants of the space-station. Seriously spooky music accompanies the emergency may-day, and sets the blood-curdling scene.

PROTIP Level guardians are easy when you know how. For the first one, make sure you have a heat-seeking firebomb and avoid his sputum, blasting all the while. He'll leave his head (the most dangerous part!), which you must stay behind whilst shooting it. A few shots later, he's history!



After the animated title (the text being an alien itself, complete with slithering poisonous tendrill!), you choose whether to play the hero or the heroine. Given the monikers Ricky and Mary, both are similarly armed, although you may spot minor differences in their build. Although rather small, they're both well-animated and have all the right moving parts; legs and arms a-waving with death-delivering glee!

The grebos come in all shapes and colours, from blue spermatozoan-type wrigglers to Dr Who-style six-foot pink maggots, and are guaranteed to send shivers down your spine long after you've fin-

ished! The big boys are fully-blown technicolour gore-merchants, all with the grim intention of dining on your entrails. The scaly egg-pod dude was my worst nightmare, his lethal

extending mandibles flashing out and

crunching my tender flesh all too often!

The backdrops are excellent, looking just like the interior of a space-station should, with attention to detail such as riveted floor panels, no-entry signs and level area indicators. They're not small either, each level being approximately ten to 15 times the screen size!

Bug-blasting your way through them, you'll notice that each one has its own particular graphics and layout, and that they become more and more alien-infested as you



Above: welcome to level four. (If you're very lucky!)

Right: this is the map of level one. Red dots indicate survivors to collect, brown signifies your position.



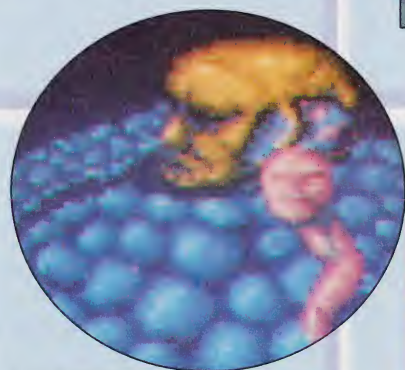
ALIEN SYNDROME



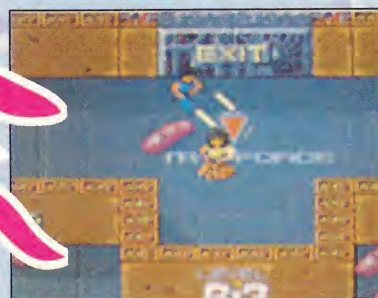
PROFILE	ALIEN SYNDROME ● SIMS CO ● £24 ● IMPORT			
	CART SIZE	2Mbit	SUPPLIER Console Concepts The Village Newcastle-under-Lyme Staffordshire ST5 1QB (0782) 712759	
	PLAYERS	1		
	STAGES	4		
	SKILL LEVELS	1		
	FEATURES	bisexual		



DRONE



progress.
A map is available with the push of a button (and is a real godsend, showing you the relative positions of the hostages and yourself), but can only be viewed three times.



Left: welcome to your worst nightmare. This guy chucks out homers from the crack in his ass and when destroyed, leaves behind his parasite, which is even deadlier!

PRO TIP Guardian number two can be killed by staying in the bottom-right corner and once again raining flame-death upon him. No problemo!

The moody theme tune adds to the sense of impending doom as much as is possible through the Game Gear's micro-speaker. Each weapon has its own peculiar noise adding to the realism (the laser almost blew my eardrums. High-pitched or what!). When your death occurs, you do an outstanding pirouette, sigh dolefully, and shuffle off your mortal coil.

There are plenty of weapons to choose from and each one can be up-rated in the extreme. For instance, the fireball (my favourite!) starts off as just an ordinary forward-fire shot, but collect a couple more and you have alien-seeking napalm from which nothing escapes. Ace!

The spartan amount of continues you're given (two) only heighten the addictiveness of this game, and although only having four levels, you'll be hard-pressed to complete it without plenty of practise beforehand.

It's nice to see that some programmers really care about their projects – especially a conversion of a really old arcade game – and *Alien Syndrome* is an example of that. Another Game Gear winner!

● James "we are leaving!" Scullion

Rogues Gallery?



Coseky: the maggot.
This guy is an extremely accurate shot, so either waste him or avoid him!



Gurufy: the swimmer.
Fairly easy to dispatch, he'll come right at you, but an accurate shot says goodbye to this guy.



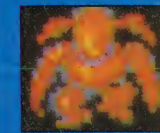
Heavy: the worm.
He's faster than you so running's out. Stand your ground and waste that sucker.



Lebo: the drip.
Possibly the most aptly named, this guy's useless. No worries.



Muis: the table.
This guy's a walking dinner table, but don't try eating your brekkie off him!



Neila: the demon.
Don't mess with this most intelligent demon. Trash his domain, not him!



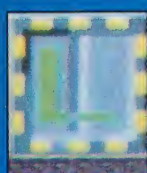
WEAPONS 'R US



The single most essential power-up! Collect two and your bug-blasting troubles are over, heat-seekers finding their mark each and every time.



This here's a flamethrower. Mighty useful it is, too! A 20-foot jet of liquid death splatters your foes into oblivion!



L for laser means collect this and high-pitched noises are the order of the day. No better than standard fire.



Mystery bonuses await the collector of this icon. But beware, as the effects aren't always positive. (Being stripped of power-ups is no fun!)



Auto rapid-fire is the prize for grabbing the rifle icon. Collect several and all-round fire can be yours!



Don't collect this whatever you do! No matter what power-up you're carrying, it'll make your shot-power abysmally weak and weedy!

GRAPHICS	85
▲ Guardians are hell-spawn deviants!	
▲ Later levels are well-techno	
SOUND	79
▲ Diverse weapon sounds.	
▼ As expected, the tune's a bit annoying.	
GAMEPLAY	84
▲ Pots of death to deliver.	
▲ Intense action around every corner.	
CHALLENGE	77
▲ Large levels to explore.	
▼ Easy to repeat once complete	

An excellent extra-terrestrial extermination escapade.

PROSCORE 83

The good Wizard Mage, Dagoon, has been horribly tortured and killed by Baldour, Prince of Evil. His daughter, Alisia, was present at the execution, but being a child was spared the same fate. During his reign of terror, Baldour periodically had to become dormant in order to restore his black magic powers. In this time his accomplice, Ornah, was charged with the protection of the cocoon that held The Dark One, till the metamorphosis into his new incarnation.

While he slept, Alisia grew tall and strong. Becoming wise in her father's arts, she vowed to seek out Ornah and his sleeping master, and to cleanse planet Earth of their presence once and for all. She was a girl determined to succeed in the task at which her father had failed!



It's been quite a while since Sega themselves brought out a decent game. Over the past few months, the third-party publishers have been allowed to shine, but now the big boys are back in force with this excellent fantasy shoot-'em-up.

You take the role of an avenging daughter in pursuit of the pond-scum that trashed your magician father. To help you, several friendly monsters are at your disposal, who will gladly give their lives in return for your safety.

Alisia Dagoon is a real joy to play, in all respects. On power-up you are confronted with a scrolling wall, delicately chiselled hieroglyphics covering its surface. The filmic presentation continues as the credits roll, superimposed over the artwork. Into the options, also hieroglyphed, and you are given the two difficulty options and four joystick configurations, for placement of thunder, selecting character and jumping.

The game starts with the storyline scrolling upwards over a snowy, mountainous backdrop. Next a huge, wonderfully-detailed fairy-like sprite zooms across the screen, Alisia possibly, and then it's into the action.

The backdrops in *Alisia* are excellent; massive redwood trees dominate the skyline, while greenery covers the forest floor. As you and your chosen familiar traverse the deep, dark forest, you are assaulted by all manner of air- and earth-bound gremlins. From flying chimps to killer fungus, from dudes on flying teapots to venus fly traps. All are particularly well-coloured and animated, with a preponderance of green. Level guardians include massive pock-marked mutant heads that spit aliens at you, and hidden underwater, invisible lurking horrors that snap at your legs whilst submerged.

Alisia is a gorgeous redhead with attitude. She move in a no-messin' kind of way which the programmers have taken great care to invoke. The magical laser you possess blasts out in an enemy-seeking arc, frazzling



PRO TIP If your joystick has a rapid-fire option, then use it. If not, get hold of one soon. It'll make life a heck of a lot easier. Beware, though, using thunder all the time may mean you haven't got a big burst when you need it.

anything that moves. Your friendly neighbourhood monster tails you, and can range from a fire-breathing dragon to a boomerang-throwing sunflower-head. All of them protect your rear but seem rather ineffectual in heavy flak. Still, their intentions are honourable.

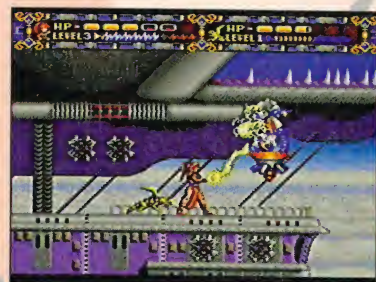
Possibly the most astounding thing about *Alisia* is the amount of music and sound effects. There are 21 kickin' in-game tunes, including Elizabethan waltzes, techno moshes, medieval fripperies and New Age meditationals, all of which add marvellously to the scenario. Sound effects number a staggering 100+ (the largest number I've come across yet!) and range in diversity from alien cats meowing to bongo drums in space. All are loud 'n' proud, and deserve full volume, despite what your neighbours might say!

There are eight gruelling levels to

To the far left is a potion which no doubt you'll need. The mid-screen bad guy is a total wimp, one shot seeing him off! Nearest you, to your right, is your familiar one of four to choose from. And right of him, two flying beasts are about to meet their maker!



One of the several mid-level guardians you'll come across. These take a phenomenal amount of hits, so keep ducking!



This massive monstrosity you're dambering across just happens to be the level three guardian, and his defences are something to behold!



This buxom young battler was brought to us from Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1QB. Tel: 0782 712759. Their American version comes with a black and white manual which contains a "journey log" allowing you to record your progress.



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Plenty of detailed scenery.
- ▲ Colourful sprites galore.

85

SOUND

- ▲ Several excellent in-game ditties.
- ▲ Massive bank of effects.

92

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Controlling Alisia is easy and fun.
- ▲ Hidden levels add mystery element.

84

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Level guardians take loads of shots.
- ▲ Life energy runs out all too soon.

85

A great combination of quality gameplay and excellent aesthetics.

PROSCORE

85



ALISIA DRAGON



Left: Look out, Alisia! That long-haired ruffian is about to smite you! A quick blast of your lightning will no doubt deter him, so get zapping!

battle your curvaceous way through, and all are extremely playable and professionally programmed, with a wide range of layout of the levels. Hidden areas are to be found all over, but once past them there's no turning back, resulting in a lost power-up. The energy pods are essential to keep both you and your monster alive in these challenging times, and luckily, are plentiful.

Graphically great, musically masterful, particularly playable and delightfully difficult, *Alisia Dragon* is a welcome addition to the Mega Drive arcade adventure collection.

● James "Dragon-breath" Scullion



PROFILE

ALISIA DRAGON ● SEGA ● £39.95 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 8
SKILL LEVELS 2
FEATURES n/a

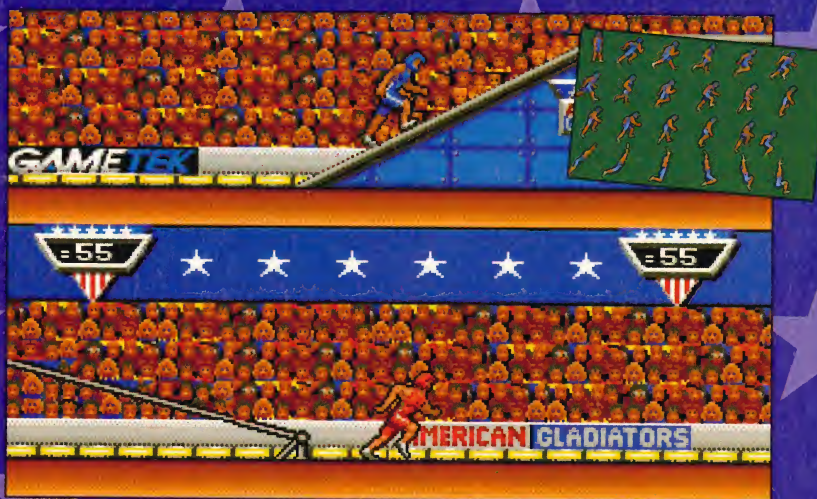
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Their mad, bad and in your face. The American Gladiators have well and truly arrived on these shores. You may have already seen their TV show, where members of the public go up against the mighty gladiators in "contests" of skill and strength. If not, you can hardly be blamed for missing it; it's shown on Friday night at 2am! Staying up to watch telly till that time in the morning is some sort of endurance test in itself, yet thousands of people endure such hardships to see their heroes every week (James being one of their greatest fans).

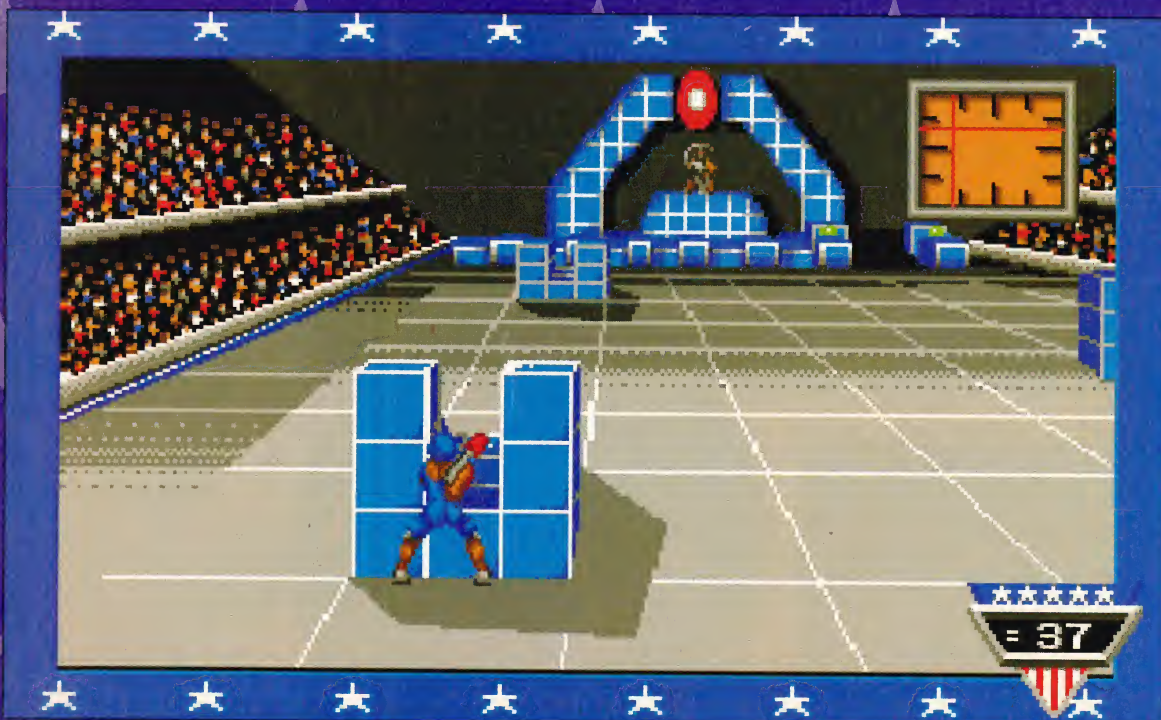
It must be catching, though, because the show in the States is so big that there are even plans to start a British version. Hey, we shouldn't criticize; the last original thing we came up with was El Dorado...



Powerball, a gruelling event where contestants must ram a ball into a small scoring pod whilst trying to fend off three gladiators who must take you down. This event requires speed, brute strength and dexterity, but don't they all?



The Eliminator! There can be only one. At the end of the bouts, the contestants must clamber through this obstacle course comprising hurdles, escalator ramps and hand bikes. Your accumulated points set the time you have to complete it in, but watch the cheating computer.

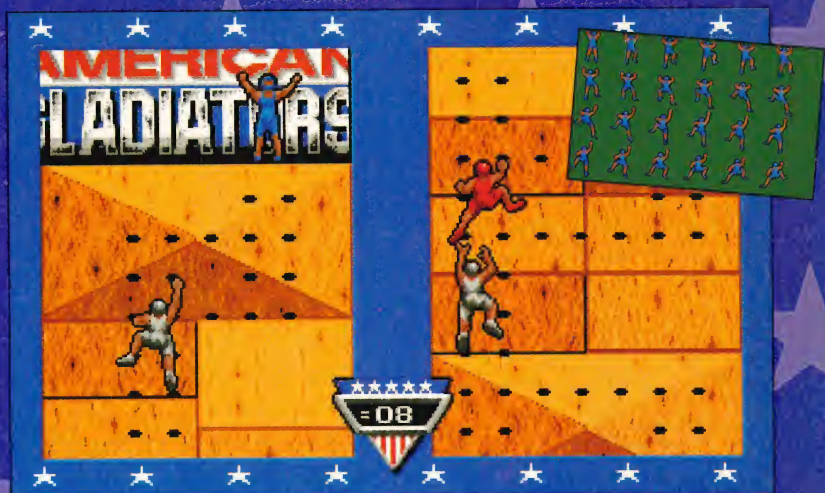


There are only a couple of games on the Mega Drive that handle multiple sport events, *Winter Challenge* and *Olympic Gold* being the only ones that spring to mind. If you take that idea and add psychotic Americans running around assaulting each other, you'll have a vague idea as to what to expect from *American Gladiators*.

Some games make proud boasts of how they can handle two or even four players at a push – in fact Master System *Monopoly* handles ten players! – but *American Gladiators* beats them all with a colossal 16 places-up for grabs. If, however, you find one friend and just want to go head-to-head then you can, but only in four of the six events.

AVAILABLE IN
USA

pro REVIEW



This event recreates rock climbing in the comfort of the Gladiator stadium. You must scale the wall in the quickest time with a gladiator hot on your heels. If you get a good guy, like Thunder, then this section is easier. If you get Nitro, you're history (he plays dirty).



The one-on-one jousting is a measure of each player's balance. A well-aimed hit in the face will send your opponent reeling, so stay low and aim for the gut. If you survive for the whole time limit you get points, but it is more satisfying to deck the gladiator and watch the humiliation.

AMERICAN GLADIATORS

PRO TIP



In the jousting, try to use the head-spinning whirlwind attack as much as you can. It is a

devastating blow that can take a lot of your opponent's energy away.

The show is filmed in a big indoor arena and the graphics manage to recreate that atmosphere quite successfully, especially in the side view events. Individual characters are a bit small though, and if you were expecting to see a close-up of the rippling muscles of Ice, you'll be severely disappointed in all but the jousting section.

The events are very short, which is probably just as well because you'd have to wait for ages for 15 other people to have their go. Admittedly, the nature of the TV show is lots of short, high-impact events, but a one-player game can take as little as a few minutes.

In some cases, I think that Gametek have tried to keep this too

close to the TV show. There are only six events and while they are accurately executed, a few more wouldn't have gone amiss. But most of the events are tough, with the computer

opponents zooming off ahead of you.

American Gladiators is a game that will appeal to everyone who likes multiple-player games, especially because of the varying control method and types of gameplay. With the British TV series about to start, names like Ice, Blaze, Nitro and Laser are destined to become household names. If you're completely sick of the Olympics, this could provide just the sort of light relief you're searching for.

● Les "slomo" Ellis

Gametek are set to release *American Gladiators* in America first. They have yet to confirm their European licence, so no date or supplier is planned as yet. Faithful importers will have the game from October.

PROFILE

AMERICAN GLADIATORS ● GAMETEK ● £37 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 16
STAGES 6
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES versus, tournament

SUPPLIER
Gametek Inc
2999 NE 191 Street
Suite 800, N Miami Beach
FL 33180
USA
(0101305) 9353995

GRAPHICS

▲ Atmospheric arena graphics, realistic characters.
▼ Overhead views too small and cluttered.

83

SOUND

▲ The music pounds away demanding...
▼ No sound effects at all!

76

GAMEPLAY

▲ Six totally different events to master.
▼ Dodgy control method in Eliminator.

69

CHALLENGE

▲ The ultimate multi-player challenge.
▼ The one-player game is far too short.

70

You've seen the show, now play the game. It's just like the real thing.

PROSCORE

72

Compilations aren't something that Sega have encouraged, yet despite their efforts, many pirate compilations have made their way out of the Far East and onto the world circuit, especially on the Game Gear.

Only packages like *Shooting Games* and *California Games* come anywhere near to a Master System compilation, but now Virgin Games, with Sega's full approval, are releasing an anthology of three classic arcade games, *Centipede*, *Break-Out* and *Missile Command*. (The other two greats, *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man*, have already received excellent MS conversions.)

The idea of three games on one cartridge is obviously value for money, but all these games are completely new implementations of the classic games – and what's more, you don't need a bag of ten pence pieces to play them.

ARCADE SMASH HITS

When I first heard that Virgin were planning to put three games on a 2Mbit Master

System cart, I was a bit dubious. Most MS games fail to exploit the machine's full capabilities, and with each game having one third of the space if a normal game, I was mildly concerned. But I shouldn't have worried, Virgin have once again done the business.

All three games – *Centipede*, *Break-Out* and *Missile Command* – are held together by one central character, strangely called Hair Pie (we knows what it means, but we're not saying). He introduces each game with his own cute title sequence, and while being as cute as Sonic, he isn't quite a fast.

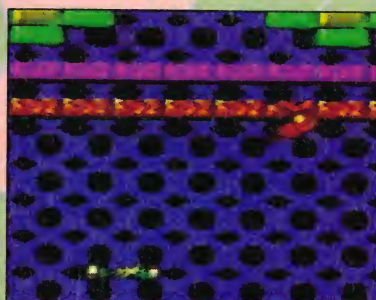
Centipede kicks off the action, and although it doesn't have the looks of *Sonic* or *Lucky Dime Caper*, it retains

all the playability of the old coin-op. The graphics are sparse, with just mushrooms and three or four different types of enemy to blast. By keeping everything simple, Virgin have managed to make the game very fast and smooth, with absolutely no flicker.

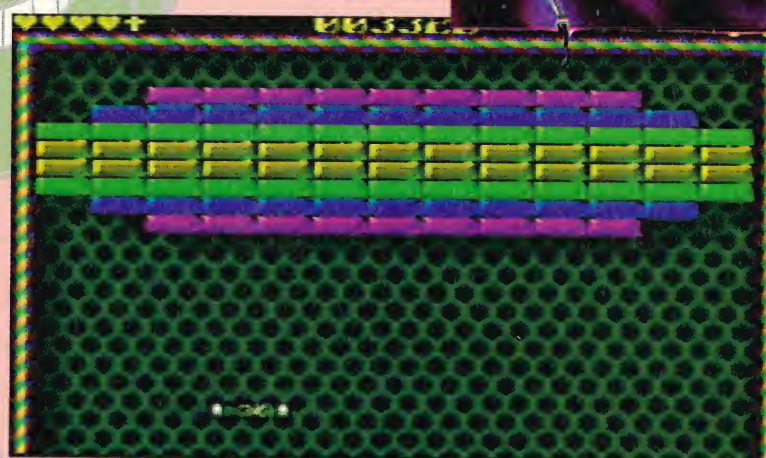
Being such an old game, I can't comment on the accuracy of the music, but what plays throughout the game certainly hammers away at a fair pace. Effects are, as is usual with MS games, kept purely functional.

Break-Out is next on the menu. There has never been a decent version of this type of game on the Master System, so any attempt is more than welcome.

The most impressive thing about this reincarnation is the backgrounds which are constantly on the move.



Note the fake speed blur behind the ball. It looks impressive but is a complete fake; it all adds to the great gameplay.



PROFILE

ARCADE SMASH HITS ● VIRGIN ● £TBA ● OUT JUNE

CART SIZE	2Mbit
PLAYERS	2
STAGES	n/a
SKILL LEVELS	n/a
FEATURES	n/a

SUPPLIER

Virgin Games
338A Ladbroke Grove
London
W10 5AH
©(081) 9602255





This not-so-smart bomb has mercilessly hit an already destroyed city when there were two easy targets on the right. Note that the central gun is already out of ammo and the left gun is soon to follow.



Looks like you didn't quite contain that Splitter. Three segments were destroyed with a salvo of missiles but that last warhead has nuked one of your last remaining cities.



Prevent these bombs falling on your cities with some new improved missiles in this latest incarnation of *Missile Command*.

This baby flies down the screen and then splits into four and flies straight towards you – scary stuff when you only have one city and a couple of shots left.

The sound effects have suffered a little. Gone are the huge explosions, with a dull squelch in their place. The gameplay, although slightly repetitive, is still a lot of fun. The panic of seeing loads of missiles onscreen with nothing to blow them up soon gets the adrenaline pumping. Most surprising of all is that the joy-pad control is almost as accurate and quick as the coin-op's trackball.

The concept of *Arcade Smash Hits* is very brave. These games are extremely simple, and rely a lot on nostalgia. Obviously, if you haven't played the original games, you may be shocked at the simplicity of the package. What these games rely on is pure playability, and because most console games are covered in a sheen of graphics and sound, some Sega players may not remember what this means.

The best of the lot is *Break-Out*, and probably the most advanced development of the old game. This could quite easily be released by itself, but with *Centipede* and *Missile*

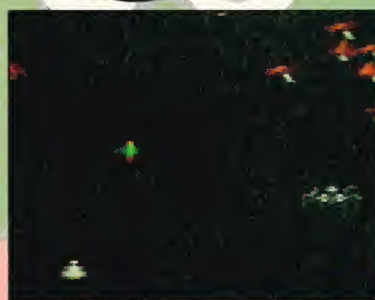


THREE ON THE GEAR

No Game Gear version of *Arcade Smash Hits* is planned and it is not really advisable to buy this to play through a Master Gear convertor. The characters are too small to see, even with a magnifier. *Centipede* is practically invisible, *Break-Out* is barely playable and *Missile Command*... just forget it.



Centipede may look like one of the most boring games around, but Virgin have retained all the original's playability and speed.



Command thrown in too, *Arcade Smash Hits* represents tremendous value for money.

● Les "fogey" Ellis

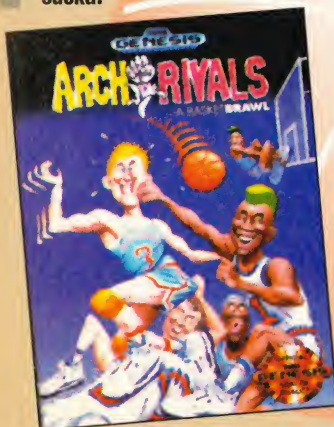
GRAPHICS	79
▲ <i>Break-Out</i> backgrounds are very colourful.	
▼ Not developed enough, but accurate.	
SOUND	80
▲ Different tunes for each game.	
▼ Effects on <i>Missile Command</i> are poor.	
GAMEPLAY	86
▲ Very, very addictive.	
▲ Undeniable qualities of nostalgia.	
CHALLENGE	80
▲ Perfectly set increasing difficulty.	
▼ Each game is fairly limited in long-term content.	
Not just nostalgia, a valid addition to any collection.	82
PROSCORE	



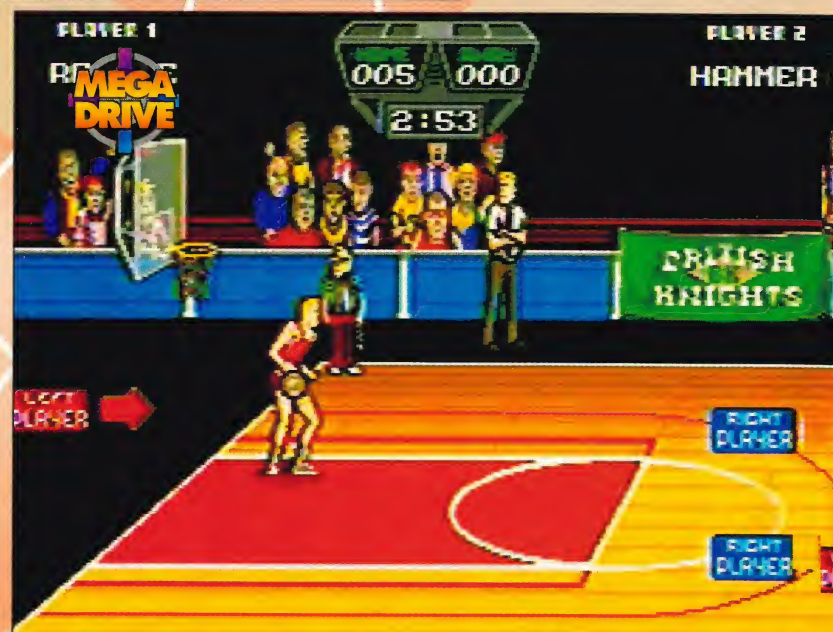
Honest sportsmen switch off this magazine now! This is possibly the most mean, dirty, lawless arcade sports challenge yet!

Basketball's the name of the game, but it's basketball with a difference! Everyone knows that rule number one is no physical contact, and any infringement of said rule results in severe punishment. Well, in *Arch Rivals* this rule is non-existent! Anything (and everything) goes, from pouncing on your opponents to kicking the referee's head in.

Apart from this rather (ahem) minor difference, *Arch Rivals* faithfully follows the sporting side of things. Sponsored by sports shoe manufacturer British Knights, it's the kind of basketball played in places like The Bronx, Harlem and Trowbridge. You gotta hang tough or you gonna get hurt, sucka!



No need to worry about the ref giving a foul – if he gets in the way just deck him, too. *Arch Rivals* is a cross between basketball and full-contact combat. Check out the bimbos to the right.



HAWK

MOOSE

TOUGH AND MEAN

REAL CHAMP

pro REVIEW

ARCH RIVALS

Subtitled "A tongue in cheek tribute to the great American sport", *Arch Rivals* is the first Sega game to come from Acclaim in the UK. And, encouragingly, it appears on both Mega Drive and Master System, with a Game Gear version to come.

This game means business right from the start. Powering up reveals a series of cartoon statics involving team managers haranguing each

other about fair play, and the title screen, a basketball exploding due to the high-speed introduction of a rather meaty fist!

The menu offers four teams to choose from. Two are real-life teams and two are highly fictitious. Each team has a pool of eight players, from which you choose your two men. All of these have an on-court speciality, be it brutality or finesse of one sort or another. The info option reveals several playing hints which

you will need to know to perform competently. (So don't forget to have a butcher's at it!)

Gameplay comes in one of three modes; single player versus the computer, two-player teamplay or two players opposing one another. In all modes other than teamplay, you have full control over one of your men while the computer is partially in charge of the other. Matches last 16 minutes real-time and are split into quarters. During intervals, hints on

strategy are given in the Coach's Corner by a Trevor McDoughnut look-a-like, and entertainment comes in the form of a troupe of scantily-clad dancing girls.

Scoring inside the marked area awards you two points while a long shot nets three. There are several methods of netting the ball, such as slam-dunking or lobbing. Succeeding brings up either a buxom cheerleader, an enraged manager or a particularly ugly ref. (But you'd be pretty ugly too if you'd been knocked around like he has!)

Arch Rivals looks great. The playing area looks just like a basketball court, complete with varnished wooden floor, advertising hoardings, home and away scoreboards, and pennant-waving audience. Players come in all creeds and colours and are well distinguishable from each other. They're all professionally animated, with a large range of movements including dribbling, jumping and punching, and so is the diminutive referee, who wanders aimlessly along the sidelines waiting to be flattened by a seven-foot globetrotter.

A mellow Axel F-style theme tune pervades the program in a soothing sort of way. All movement on court is

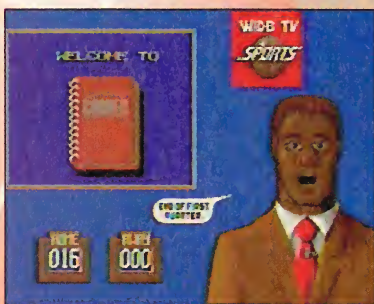
PRO TIP

Punching takes too much time, so go for the lunge. Line yourself up and take that dive!



HAMMER'S BEST

COACHES HIT	POINTS	SHOT %	STEALS	REBOUNDS
BTH	32	53 %	06	04
REA	30	75 %	02	06
IFE	28	65 %	06	09
AFR	21	44 %	04	06
NPA	17	66 %	03	05



"Come on, Reggie, the crowd is waiting. How long does it take to put on your bowler boots and knuckle dusters?"

accompanied by sampled shouts from the players, and is exactly what you would expect to hear at such an event. What you wouldn't expect to hear are the groans and violent crunches of flesh meeting bone as players collide (accidentally, of course).

Gameplay is fast and furious, especially in two-player mode, which as usual brings out the beast in us Pros. Dribbling my way down the court and being mugged from behind just as I was lining up that crucial three-pointer often had me off for a lie down with a couple of Anadin and a cold towel. (Leaving the Publisher, who is larger than nature intended, grinning like a Cheshire cat!)

Passing is a relatively easy affair (you've only one player to choose to pass to!), but shooting the hoop takes a tad more skill. Even the fairly easy dunk shot requires practise, but after a while, and with the right wrist action, the ball will be flying from your hand, travelling across the whole play area, and blasting through that ring with supreme ease.

This game will keep you on your toes. The computer's a natural, but



the right player and good strategy play. Harder still is to play against a human opponent, the more random elements enhancing the need for skilful play.

On both Mega Drive and Master System, this game is most enjoyable, especially in two-player mode. All the animation and graphical detail has been included on both versions. The only disappointment is that the game is lacking the variety of teams and competitions to ensure long-term addiction. Once you get playing it, *Arch Rivals* is great fun, but it's one of those games you rarely want to go back to. Even so, this is one wacky game to play.

● James "Magic" Scullion

GRAPHICS	82
▲ Smooth, well-animated characters.	
▲ Loads of colour and depth.	
SOUND	80
▲ Funky vibrations, man!	
▲ Do these guys ever stop talking?	
GAMEPLAY	81
▲ Super two-player atmosphere.	
▼ Control over computer player could be better.	
CHALLENGE	80
▲ Accuracy is of paramount importance.	
▼ Distinct lack of skill levels.	
Great, great fun, but not enough content for MD owners.	80
PROSCORE	80

PROFILE	ARCH RIVALS	ACCLAIM	£TBA	OUT APRIL
CART SIZE	4/2Mbit			
PLAYERS	2			
STAGES	4			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	versus			
		SUPPLIER		
		Acclaim UK		
		4 Walcote Place		
		Winchester		
		Hants		
		SO23 9AP		
		☎(0962) 877788		

LOOKIN' GOOD ON THE MASTER SYSTEM TOO!



Starting in your own zone, points are just a hop, skip, jump and punch away.



Why have five players on a team when two will do amply... This takes away player control problems and makes the game a lot more fun.



The blue player keeps an eye out for any stray uzis that may come into play while his partner tees up the shot. It may only be a two-pointer but they all count.



GRAPHICS	83
▲ Smooth and well-animated.	
▲ All the sprites have real character.	
SOUND	72
▲ Great bouncing sound.	
▼ Non-aggressive tune is unsuitable.	
GAMEPLAY	81
▲ Totally engrossing two-player mode.	
▼ Switches control with irregularity.	
CHALLENGE	82
▲ Harder to sink baskets than MD.	
▲ The computer team is very good!	
Strictly two-player only, but very enjoyable.	83
PROSCORE	83

AX BATTLER

A LEGEND OF GOLDEN AXE

The tale of the Golden Axe had dimmed with the passage of time. Everybody, it seemed, had forgotten the stories of the legendary power it delivered to its wielder. Everybody except two people: the King of Firewood Castle, keeper and guardian of this most powerful of weapons, and the evil Death Adder, Dark Lord of the era. His armies had imposed a curfew on the citizens, under penalty of death, and no-one was safe!

The King's armies were no match for the denizens of the dark side, and after suffering appalling losses, he decided that a different strategy was needed. To send one warrior where whole battalions had failed seemed insane, but this brave youth was the fabled Ax Battler!



Battling our way through the crowds of Easter shoppers, we managed to get our review copy of Ax Battler from the very helpful TV Games at 11 Castle Parade, Ewell By-pass, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2PR. Tel: (081) 7867816. At the very reasonable price of £29.99 including postage and packing, they will deliver this game direct to your door. Now that's what we call service.



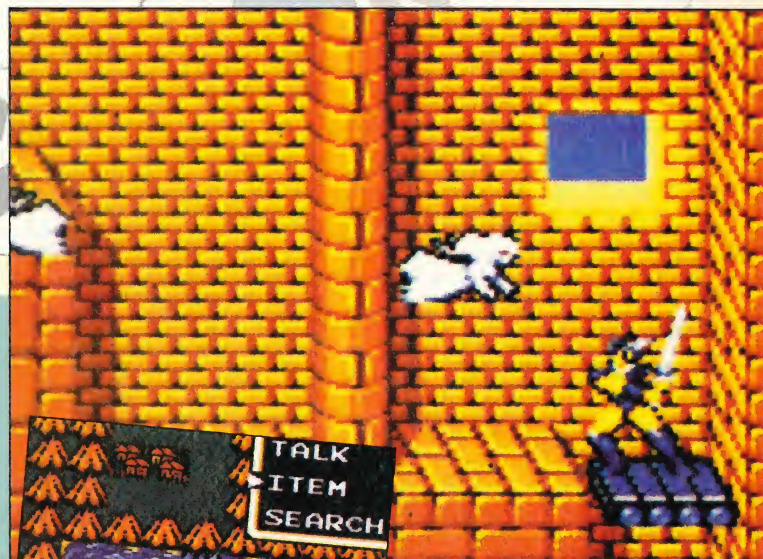
PROTIP Find a village and seek out the swordsmaster. He'll train you in special attack moves. These provide superior kill-power when faced with bogeys, and cost absolutely nothing!

Ax Battler was purported to be the classic Golden Axe for the Game Gear, but as it turns out is a rather more complex affair than its older relatives. This time our hero is on a solo mission, his fighting companions having hung up their weapons and retired to the Bide-a-Wee Twilight Home for Ex-warmongers.

Power up and you are presented with the scrolling storyline, backed by the obligatory techno-medieval soundtrack. Zoom past this and the title screen jumps out at you in gore-laden red and wealth-ridden gold. Next comes a smart little animation in which you converse with the castle occupants, who give you various hints 'n' tips before you set off on your way. You're then forcefully ejected from the Keep into the big wide world, with nothing but a sword, a loincloth, and some rather fetching knee-length red boots!

The main game consists of two distinct types of gameplay. The first is a Gauntlet-style jaunt, in which Ax Battler (a midget sprite) must traverse a 2-D map in search of miscreants to decapitate, villages to visit, and potions to collect. On encountering an evil-doer, the screen format changes to something more akin to the original. You, as Ax Battler, appear on the left side of the screen and, unsurprisingly, your opponent on the right. If you don't relish slashing the poor fool to death yourself, then, depending on your overall health, you can call on your store of magical powers and just zap the sap!

The graphics aren't much to write home about on the map screen, but



AX BATTLER threw the BOMB toward the mountain.

Are you gonna talk or search? The message below could help you in your decision.

come into their own on the conflict screens. Both combatants are really well-animated; the swords slashing, the blood flowing, and the boot going in, ending eventually in the demise of the inferior swordsman!

Soundwise Ax Battler is nothing special, conforming to the majority of GG software. The standard (annoying) soundtrack and minimal FX do little to enhance the game, although the sword-slash noise is particularly satisfying as an adversary falls to the floor mortally wounded!

Above: these guys look friendly enough, but watch out when they swoop! Their faces mutate from sweet angelic smiles into destructive demonic death-masks!

There are plenty of extras to collect, including the option to learn speciality moves at a training house, magical potions, and the bodies of willing young ladies at doss-houses. You can also interact with the other characters by talking to them or searching them, as opposed to killing them. All of these features add to the playability, and help to create a plausible RPG-cum-beat-'em-up, set at just the right difficulty. Keep battling, there's a long-lasting game in there somewhere!

● James "Slaine" Scullion

PROFILE	AX BATTLER	SEGA	£29.99	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	10			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	n/a			
		SUPPLIER		
		Sega UK		
		16 Portland Road		
		London		
		W11 4LA		
		©(071) 7278070		

GRAPHICS	80
▲ Wonderful combat scenes.	
▼ The map screen is rather low-res.	
SOUND	42
▼ Game Gear sound at its most mediocre.	
▼ Annoying tune will have you playing in silence!	
GAMEPLAY	84
▲ Classic slash-'em-up action.	
▲ Interspersed with elements of strategy.	
CHALLENGE	73
▲ Younger players will be hard-pressed.	
▼ Experienced gamers may find it easy.	
An odd game in the Golden Axe range, but still a refreshing change.	
PROSCORE	77

Terror gripped the land of Arcus. An evil sorceress named Castomira was using dark magic to transform the land into her own dark design. Thousands of innocent people were killed in the ensuing destruction, many good men died defending their homeland.

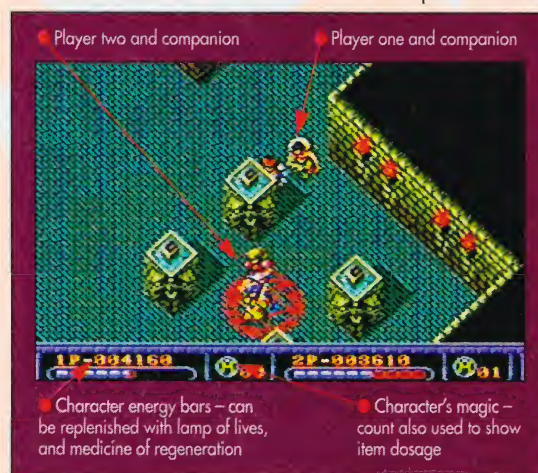
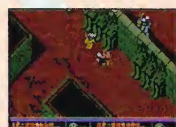
Only one person stood a chance of defeating her, Leaty the good sorceress. The battle which raged between them destroyed the land but good overcame evil and Castomira was imprisoned in the eternal darkness within a magic sword. Arcus slowly rebuilt itself and peace reigned till followers of Castomira stole the sword and revived her. Now the whole world faces the onslaught of the darkness once more.

The only chance is for a brave band of heroes to venture into Castomira's mountain stronghold and ascend to the sky city to defeat her. Only then can Leaty banish her to the void once again.



At first glance you may mistake *Arcus* for just another roleplaying game, but this is definitely not the case. From the outset, the well-detailed landscapes and weird mythological beasts enhance what is already a well-grafted and professional-looking adventure.

Arcus is lavishly presented with a fabulous introduction showing the



sorceress watching the destruction

of a city, and the two enemies fighting each other with magic. The statics are well drawn in an imaginative comic style, and the game map shown between levels is set in moody blues and soft reds evoking the dark mountains' evil aura.

Everything about this game says quality; the amount of man-hours spent on it must have been phenomenal.

The most common feature of modern RPGs is the gorgeous graph-

ism. *Arcus Odyssey's* graphics are amazing, every colour known to the Mega Drive must have been used to shade the walls and define your surroundings in the clearest possible way.

Arcus is appealing because it combines the most popular elements of many epic games. There's the exploration and fear of the unknown from *Gauntlet*, the superb graphics and fiendish logic of *The Immortal* and the hack 'n' slash action of *Sword of Sodan*. Yet *Arcus* manages to remain individual and innovative despite these influences.

An integral part of

PROTIP The perfect strategy to adopt when facing guardians is only viable in two player mode. Let one of the characters invoke his shield and distract the creature's attention while the other gets behind it and rams their sword right up...



PROTALK Smashing graphics and great sound tracks to match. How can a colossal game like this fail? Large levels for lots of exploring with a mate, loads of nasties to bash and lots of treasures to collect. It's a winner!

Name.....ADRIAN "shut that"
DAW "bell"
FromHILPERTON
Age22
Fave gameCOLUMNS
OwnsMASTER SYSTEM



PROFILE

ARCUS ODYSSEY ● RENOVATION ● £44.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 8
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES teamplay, password

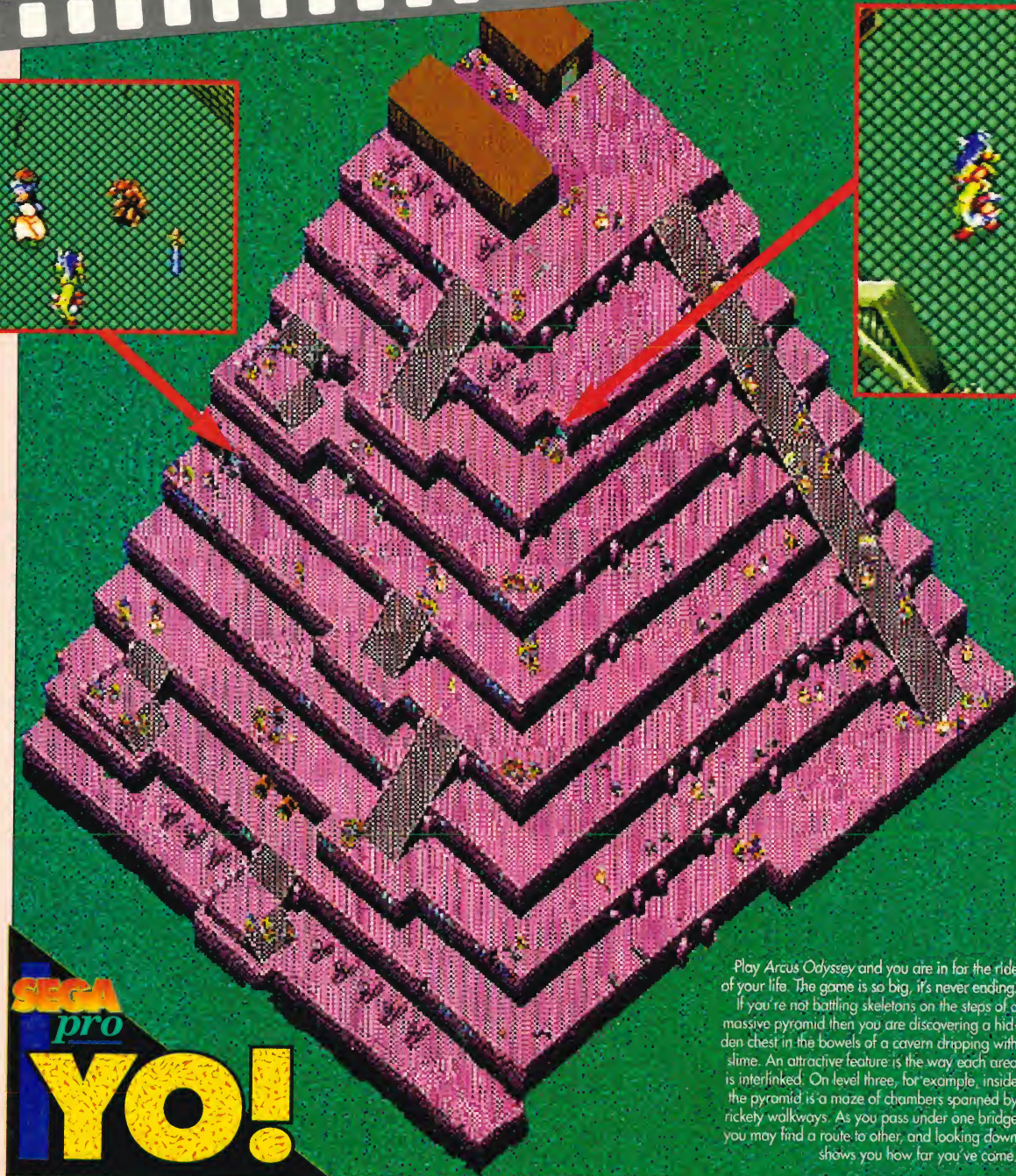
SUPPLIER

Ubi Soft
Saddlers House
100 Reading Road
Yately, Camberley
Surrey GU17 7RX
(0252) 860299

ARCUS



Just one of the many rooms you can enter along your monstrous trek through this gigantic game.



Play *Arcus Odyssey* and you are in for the ride of your life. The game is so big, it's never ending. If you're not battling skeletons on the steps of a massive pyramid then you are discovering a hidden chest in the bowels of a cavern dripping with slime. An attractive feature is the way each area is interlinked. On level three, for example, inside the pyramid is a maze of chambers spanned by rickety walkways. As you pass under one bridge you may find a route to other, and looking down shows you how far you've come.

this game is the music and sound effects. There are exploration tunes to spur you on in your quest, chimes upon discovering important items, and danger alarms when a potentially life-threatening situation is imminent. The crunching, pulsing and squelching noises are extremely gratifying, particularly when it accompanies the demise of a stubborn guardian.

One disappointment, though, is the way a second player can not join the fray at a later stage. This means that unless your companion is present from level one, you can not enjoy team pillaging.

Despite these set-backs, *Arcus* is still a fantastic game that should last for ages. The concluding levels are large and forbidding, ensuring that even if you do complete it, each game will hold different challenges.

● Damian "nut" Butt

SEGA
pro
YO!

GRAPHICS	95
▲ Unbelievably colourful and varied.	
▲ Level layouts are incredibly realistic.	
SOUND	90
▲ A terrific tune each level.	
▲ Excellent chimes and weapon effects.	
GAMEPLAY	93
▲ Two players, twice the action.	
▲ Easy to enter and very addictive.	
CHALLENGE	88
▼ Not too tough for two players.	
▲ But should last eons for one player.	
Grab a friend and enjoy the latest, spectacular arcade adventure for the MD.	
PROSCORE	92

ODYSSEY

The year is 50BC. The place, Gaul. The Roman conquest of Europe has reached out and engulfed all of France. All, that is, except one small settlement in the north-west. These folk are of hardier stock. Their mystical Druid, Getafix, is the only person able to brew the fabled invincibility potion, enabling them to withstand the invasion.

The Romans are, understandably, rather distressed. With Caesar breathing down their necks for total domination, the embarrassment of the surrounding garrisons at not being able to defeat a small band of smelly Gauls is almost total!

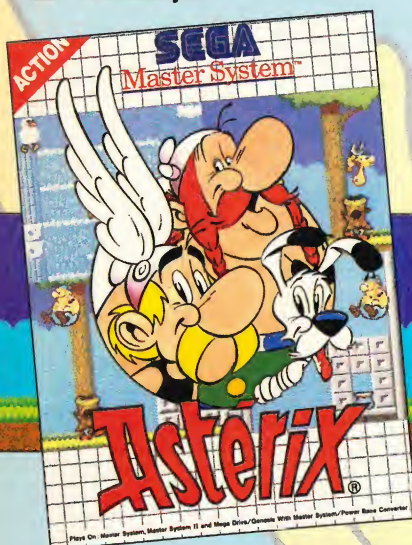
One clever centurion constructs a cunning plan. In order to defeat the Gauls he must halt production of the potion, and to do that Getafix must be kidnapped. Out collecting herbs in the forest one day, he's whisked away to Rome, and it's your job, as Asterix or Obelix, to rescue him, or allow the Romans to overcome you!



Asterix is one of those few games which is a real pleasure to review (most are approached with trepidation!). Everything about it reminds you of those classic Goscinny and Uderzo books that lay yellowing under your bed – till you found them years later and had to admit that they were still a damn good read!

The intro graphics are excellent and could have been ripped straight from the actual books, containing scenes from both the village and from Rome. So do the in-game scenes, which range from the forest outside the village to the streets of

Rome. Centurions pop out from every conceivable hidey-hole in a vain attempt to capture you. They are well-drawn and animated, as are you, whether you're Asterix or Obelix (in his fashionable blue-and-white panta-loons!). Swaggering along at a lazy



Sega UK may be the official supplier of Asterix, but we obtained our copy from the marvellously un-French Jason the Basin at TV Games, 11 Castle Parade, Ewell By-Pass, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2PR. Tel: (081) 7867816.





Above: what a fine figure of a man. The (c)hunky Obelix makes his way through a brick wall as only he can. No messin', with those ham-fists!

PROTIP



Some hidden levels may be accessed by jumping into the brickwork chimneys. These usually have lids which must be punched off before entry is possible.

pace, delivering blows to all and sundry, you are drawn into the game, slowly becoming just a viewer of the fabulous cartoons you used to watch as a child.

The jolly little ditty playing throughout adds to the fun of the game, although it hasn't a hint of Gallic *je ne sais quoi*. Sound effects are also in line with the superior texture of this

Asterix in Gear

Asterix is bound to come out on the Game Gear soon, but till it does appear you can play it with no worries on the Game Gear through the magical Master Converter. The little text that does appear is totally readable and the graphics are perfectly formed on the small screen. Sound does wonders with the little plucky speaker. Only the tiny, but harmful, blobs present any real eye-strain. Don't miss it.



game, all movement accompanied with a relevant thud, boing or splat!

Asterix is one of the most playable games on the Master System. Collision detection is spot on, and running, jumping and all other movement is fluid and flicker-free.

There are eight fun-packed levels, all with plenty of puzzles to solve. Some screens require the talents of Asterix, and some can only be completed by Obelix. Collect a certain amount of bones and even Dogmatix joins in with a bonus bubble-popping round (great touch!).

Hidden rooms litter the play area and require certain criteria to be fulfilled before you're allowed access. Swimming practice is a must as several sub-sections are exactly that, sub-sections, involving taking a deep

breath and immersing yourself in the old briny. You can hold your breath for as long as you're submerged, but take care on surfacing, as danger may be lurking up above!

On your journey to free Getafix, you will come across several types of potion (left by the Druid himself, no doubt!) which you'll find absolutely necessary to bridge and create gaps, destroy guardians and replenish dwindling health. Also littered around the playing area are several goodies to boost your points, such as coins and bags of gold. Don't leave keys behind either, as these are essential to completing the level.

Each level has a guardian, some have even more! All of these require different tactics to destroy, and only experience will tell you which to employ. Some are even indestructible. (How about that for difficulty!)

Destined to be a classic, along with the likes of *The Lucky Dime Caper*, Asterix once again proves that the limitations imposed upon the Master System are in reality only the limitations of the programmers, and that class software can still be produced on this great little machine.

● James "I Claudius" Scullion



Above: a small section from level 1:1. This tree-lined avenue is not as friendly as it seems. A clue: don't pick the daisies!

PROFILE ASTERIX ● SEGA ● £32.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 8
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES bi-lingual

SUPPLIER
Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
(071) 7278070

GRAPHICS	93
▲ Extensive and varied backgrounds.	
▲ Brilliant animation on the main sprite	
SOUND	85
▲ Quite an amusing tune really!	
▼ Mais s'en pas fait de Français!	
GAMEPLAY	91
▲ Them Wogs deserve all they get.	
▲ Varied and diverse objective	
CHALLENGE	86
▲ Puzzles require extensive thought.	
▼ Could prove to be a little easy in long-term.	
No matter what your age, you'll absolutely love Asterix!	
PROSCORE	90

You know how it goes... It's a pleasant, peaceful day and without any warning at all, a rather large fleet of alien ships appear, hovering menacingly in the cloudy autumn sky, and proceed to splatter our beloved Earth with bomb craters.

While these no-good aliens are stealing your fellow humans by the thousand, you, under the moniker of Chelnov, and your father seek shelter in their underground laboratory. As your father draws his last dying breath, he unveils the secret of the Atomic Suit.

"It was found buried deep within an ancient Egyptain pyramid," he says, gasping for oxygen. "There was also a scroll depicting the design of the suit. It must have been designed and built by the aliens now attacking us. It was obvious that they've been here before, and are now coming back to reclaim what they believe is theirs." Your father sighs and then his eyes close for the last time. With sadness in your heart, you don the Atomic Suit knowing it is the only way to rid Earth of this extra-terrestrial scum. You are the Atomic Runner... Earth is waiting for you to save her...



Atomic Runner starts with an intricately ornate title screen which incorporates an animated version of the cover illustration. A quick trip to the options screen presents you with a wealth of choices: difficulty level (with three settings), number of lives and continues, pre-programmed button assignments and an option to turn on or off auto-fire and (for some obscure reason) auto-jumping.

Starting the game proper drops you right in at the deep end. As you explode out of the underground laboratory, the first things to hit you are the in-game tunes and FX. They both add to the feel of the game, which is fast and furious. There are loads of tunes in the game ranging from slightly rock orientated to downright funky! The FX are equally good with huge explosions and laser fire almost ripping your TV speaker to shreds.

The screen continually scrolls from left to right with some beautiful parallax effects which helps the game's unrelenting appearance. Fantastic backgrounds together with colourful and detailed, albeit small, sprites fill the screen. The main character is wonderfully animated, which nearly puts *Prince of Persia* to shame!

The game boasts seven tough levels, with the first seeing you battle your way *Rolling Thunder*-style out of your underground lab and into the open air. Then it's over a snow-covered landscape, complete with a blizzard in progress, through a dense jungle and a superb Egyptian desert complete with eye-catching pyramids, finally climaxing with a desperate run through the alien-infested streets of New York. All the backgrounds are expertly drawn with lovely detail throughout, such as the hieroglyphics on the Egyptian level.

PRO TIP Always use the fireball weapon when you can get it. It has the largest size bullet and is especially good for dispatching level guardians.

The many, many aliens you encounter are well-drawn and detailed, with some of them looking extremely creepy indeed. The animation of the aliens is nowhere near as good as the main character, but still



Just look at those gloriously detailed backgrounds! Every level is packed with colour and contains more than a few surprises. Here you find yourself being chased by the Loch Ness dragon. Make sure you don't stop running, or you could find yourself shark meat.

creates the necessary illusion of their deadly intent. The level guardians are the exception to this rule; they're huge, almost filling the entire screen. (I defy anyone to see the huge robot at the end of the sixth level without muttering a few choice words.)

The gameplay is a little different to

your normal run-of-the-mill platform game. Firstly, you can't fire backwards unless you actually turn around! This can be a bit tricky at first but soon becomes second nature as you press a specific button to initiate the flip of Chelnov. Secondly, when you jump, you per-





USA

pro

REVIEW



Late on in level one you'll come face to face with the incessant bullet-pumping of the wall guns. Just be cool and jump those suckers because shooting them will take ages.



Pick-ups aplenty as loads of gifts fall from the skies. Who knows what they contain, just pick 'em up and pray for something special.

ATOMIC RUNNER

GRAPHICS

▲ Great animation on Chelno and guardians.
▼ Aliens have noticeably cut down animation.

80

SOUND

▲ Great tunes bash along all through the game.
▼ FX include great lasers and explosions.

79

GAMEPLAY

▲ Fast, fast, fast and fast again!
▼ Turning around to shoot behind you is tricky.

75

CHALLENGE

▲ Extremely easy - NOT!
▼ Not too welcoming for inexperienced players.

80

Challenging and original
gameplay ensures long-
term appeal.

PROSCORE

79

form a nifty somersault. It may not sound exciting, but when combined with a spray of fire through 360°, it looks damn impressive. And thirdly, you can kill most of the aliens by jumping on their heads (not unlike a certain Italian chap that we all know and hate!).

You start with a small laser but power-ups can be gained from shooting the tops of torches which line all the levels or by shooting aliens which sometimes appear carrying the life-giving and death-dealing symbols. These range from an awesome fireball to a pathetic spinning morning star.

Atomic Runner is a refreshing change from the normal scrolling shoot-'em-up. Great graphics and sound, together with fast and furious gameplay, make this a game that will keep you up till the wee hours of the morning muttering "Just one more try before I hit the sack - honest!". My only gripe is that on the easiest difficulty level it can get a bit tough, even for seasoned Pros. But, hey, it's better than being completed on the first day, right?

● Dino "Dini"
Boni

PROTALK EXTRA!

Atomic Runner was reviewed by avid SEGAPRO reader, Dino Boni. Being a loyal Sega dude, Dino had no problem landing a job at House of Fun video games centre in Christchurch, Dorset, where he presently advises all customers to put Sega at the top of their shopping list. Taking the ProTalker reader reviews one step further, we hope to have more SEGAPRO readers fully reviewing and rating future games in SEGAPRO. We'll be picking people at random from our normal mailbag, so watch out, we may call on YOU next!



Name: Dino Boni
Address: 21
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 10st 11lbs
Eyes: grey
Hair: yep!

Fave MD game: Sports Talk Baseball

Fave MS game: Impossible Mission

Fave GG game: Columns

Fave Mega-CD game: Sol-Feace

Interests: surfing, video games, girls, surfing, girls, girls, surfing, video games, beer, girls, surfing.



PROFILE

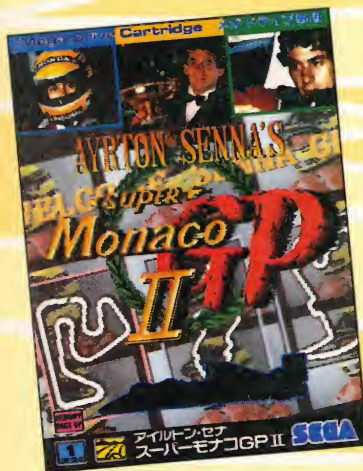
ATOMIC RUNNER ● DATA EAST ● £34.95 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 7
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
AMS Electronic Games
Dept SNB (pro)
9 Hay Lane
Kingsbury
London NW9 9EL
☎ (081) 4502166

Ayrton Senna is infamous on the Formula One circuit for his short fuse and extremely fiery temper! Indeed, his anger has often led him to strike another driver for taking his line or shutting him out. His arrogance is only outshone by his driving brilliance, which, when on form, is a joy to behold.

Last year he scooped the Drivers' Championship easily, but this year it's a different story. Mansell and Patrese, with their superior Williams Renaults are dominating both the Drivers' and Constructors' championships. Jingoism aside though, Senna is widely reputed to be the best driver of our time, and with a good car should be able to make a good fight out of the remaining races. His obsessive drive for success makes any race he's competing in an exciting one. It's up to you to meet his challenge!



Feeling flush? Fancy the Japanese version which we reviewed here? Get your £38 off to Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759.



Look, I've already told you twice! Stop looking at the damn scenery, and get your eyes on the road! And no, we can't stop for a picnic! This is a Formula One racetrack, man!



One of the very few additions to the Super Monaco sequel. You get an aerial view of the starting line-up before the race, showing your position in relation to the leaders!

Super Monaco GP II is, quite simply, *Super Monaco GP* with a refit. There's a whole new front-end bolted on, with lots and lots of lovely statics and backdrops, but in general the gameplay hasn't been altered. It seems a bit of a shame for Formula One fans that the update isn't as radical as we all would have liked.

There are plenty of hi-res mugshots of the man himself, complete with the obligatory hints and tips on how to race your chosen track. The tracks have all been re-

designed and sport some absolutely cracking scrolling horizons! No, really, these are the most impressive backdrops I think I've seen on the Mega Drive, and are the most redeeming features of a game which could easily be classed as a total rip-off!

The cars are straight from the first game, as is the screen layout. The rev-counter, lap indicator, and rear-view mirror have remained totally unchanged. Perhaps because they're most effective there, or perhaps the coders were a bunch of lazy

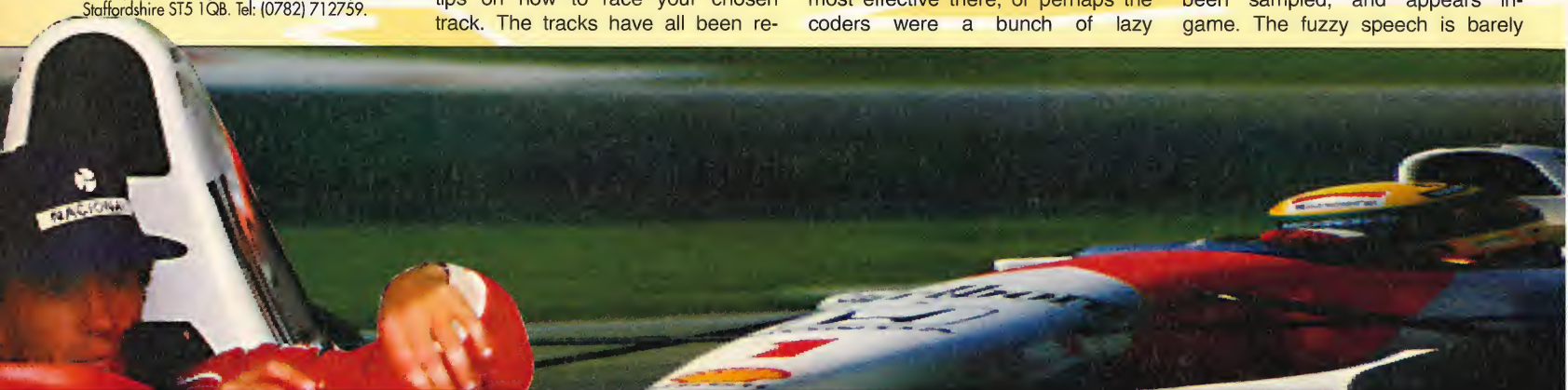
This is Brazil, my home country. I actually designed this course for go carts.



These are the only new tracks to be added to Monaco II, and are probably the toughest!

dossers? The action is still fast and furious, but just too samey in my opinion to warrant a second game, especially one with such a hefty price tag (£49.99)!

14 tunes await the musical connoisseur, but fail to excite at all! They all sound like they came straight out of a dingy arcade, complete with fag-burns and chewing gum on the carpet. The eight sound FX would be amazingly funny if they were any sadder. The engine noise sounds incredibly like a swarm of bees, and the screeching skid reminded me of one of those irritating high-pitched alarm clocks! The rest could do well in a shoot-'em-up, making excellent explosion sounds! Ayrton's voice has been sampled, and appears in-game. The fuzzy speech is barely





PROFILE

SUPER MONACO GP II ● SEGA ● £49.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	Sega UK
PLAYERS	1		16 Portland Road
STAGES	16		London
SKILL LEVELS	2		W11 4LA
FEATURES	battery back-up		©(071) 7278070

GRAPHICS ▲ Lots of really nice stunts. ▲ Brilliant backgrounds on all tracks!	83
SOUND ▼ Terrible effects that are totally out of place. ▼ Gorgeously-muffled samples.	40
GAMEPLAY ▼ No impression of speed; brakes too harsh! ▼ Totally unrealistic handling for handling!	35
CHALLENGE ▼ Much easier than the first game. ▼ You won't even need the brakes!	41



Who put that mountain in the way?
No worries, we'll just dig a tunnel through it



As you can see from the leaderboard, Les has
an outstanding lead. Ayrton isn't too happy.

Like *Golden Axe II*,
another easier, copycat
sequel for more money!
PROSCORE 41

intelligible, as
he tells you to
"c'mon", or to "keep
it up", and does
nothing for his street
cred!

Modes of play number
three and comprise Senna
GP, World Championship,
and Free Practice. The Senna
GP is a race on one of three
specially designed tracks against
the man himself. He tips the track
as it rotates around his head in a
vaguely psychedelic manner, you
choose your transmission, and then
it's into the competition. After qualify-
ing, you're shown an aerial view of
the line-up, and then it's balls-out
racing!

The Free Practice has a wonderful
effect whereby you see the track
accompanied by a scrolling horizon
of the town in question. Into World
Championship mode, and the battery
back-up comes into play. Store your
stats, and you could work your way

This indicator shows the lap and track
records. So now you know what you've
got to beat!

Here we see the relative times for
each of the laps you've completed.

Here's your tachometer, and also your
gear position indicator (if you're in man-
ual that is!).

This is your scanner, which shows
you where you are on the track, and
how many laps you've completed.

up to the number one spot.

Out of all of my criticisms, the
main one has to be the lack of real
Formula One feel. When you're tak-
ing a bend, hug the corner and you'll
be alright no matter what speed
you're travelling at! Where's the rac-
ing line, the braking down the gears,
and the massive petrol explosions?

To be quite frank, *SMGP 2* is a
total con and I for one won't be play-
ing it again, trendy statics or not!
Save your money and get the origi-
nal instead; it's cheaper and a more
challenging game. When will Sega
ever get a sequel right?

● James "love wagon" Scullion

PROTIP Starting near
the back? To
grab a few
positions, just
get straight
onto the grass
and hit the
gas! You'll pass all of the
bunched-up chumps waiting
for some space!



Oi, Senna! Nice
game, mate - NOT!

Yeeee-haaa! Welcome to the Wild West, partners! Did y'hear the one about the two cowpokes that scooted around through time savin' folk? Well this is their story, so gather 'round the kindlin' an' Ah'll tell y'all about it.

There was this here fellow, Doc Emmett Brown if'n Ah remember rightly, an' he was an inventory-fellow. Always with bits of glass 'n' wire hangin' from his britches, an' an ornery stare on his dial. Some reckon he came from way in the future, just to save a schoolteacher from an early visit to Boot Hill. (an' some reckon that's just plum crazy talk!)

Well, one day a stranger rode into town. Clint Eastwood he called himself (dang funny name, that!) an' Ah could tell soon as Ah set mah peepers on him that he was from exactly the same place as the Doc. An' the rest? Well, the rest is just hist'ry!



Back to the Future 3 is a game with three totally different levels, all of which relate well to the film, each having a static showing a relevant shot from the story.

Level one sees the Doc on horseback, chasing the runaway buckboard carriage containing his heart-throb, Miss Clara. The side-on 2-D graphics on this level are large and colourful, with plenty of cacti, buffalo skulls, and red-rock boulders fleshing it out. The Doc and his steed are well-animated, galloping along at break-neck speed in pursuit of his sweetheart. Along the way he can collect several of Clara's (ahem) smalls for bonus points, and several extras float by, which can be caught if

PROTIP



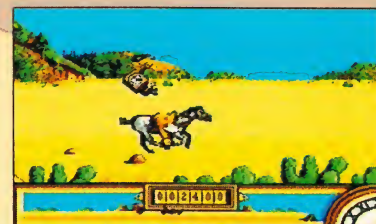
Remember to replenish your plate supply on level two, otherwise you'll have no defence against the crooks, and become a sitting duck!

skilful enough, for extra lives, time and speed, to name but a few.

The bad guys on this level are all lethal and quick. There are two types; animated and



Great Scott! How time flies! Mind that clock, Doc, or you'll be taking an early dust-bath, because this is your last life, pardner!



static. The animated ones include swooping kamikaze buzzards, bad guys also on horseback shooting from the hip, and tomahawks thrown straight at your bonce. These must all be shot or ducked, or it's a dusty tumble off your horse and a life less. The static hazards range from tree-stumps to bridges and pits which your mount must jump. If your timing is out then he'll refuse and send you flying, decreasing your life-clock once more.

A jolly Western-ish theme jangles through this

level, and sound effects include gunshots, an "oof!" when you're knocked down and a "whoop-whoop!" as your horse stalls.

Collision detection isn't exceptional but just about tolerable. The frustration factor is quite high, although you get plenty of continues with which to try again (even though you've got a raging case of saddle-sores!). Strangely, the first level is the toughest of the game.

The most fun you can have in this game arrives in level two. Facing horrendous odds, you must kill all of the bent Marshall Buford's henchmen. They all have six-shooters, and you'll be glad to hear you're armed with... wait for it... plates. Yes, plates! Throwing



BACK TO THE FUTURE III PART 1

them like frisbees, you must hit each thug several times for him to drop out of the running. Accuracy is the key point in this level, because they're all sharpshooters themselves.

Graphically this level is nothing like the last. You're Clint (Marty) this time, in forced 3-D perspective. The well-drawn hoods all pop out from doorways and windows of extremely well-drawn buildings, guns a-blazin' in an attempt to pepper your hide. Gunshots and smashing sounds accompany the action, as does another red-neck tune. A scoreboard tells you how many you have left to hit, and once all gone, out comes the Marshall himself, making a beeline for you. Fire a few saucers at his fat head, and he's history. That's it, level two completed.

Level three is a different affair once again. Travelling across the top of a moving steam train, you must battle your way against even more thugs, towards the engine.



Above: watch out for the guy on the roof, Marty! Frisbees are back in fashion, so get that wrist action going!

Your silver DeLorean time machine is being shunted along by it, in an attempt to pass it through the event horizon. If this happens before you get there, then it's bye-bye 20th century! Along the way you must collect various keys to allow you access to the later parts of the train. Not collecting them results in having to backtrack. As you're on a time limit, this can be rather infuriating!

Graphically the third is the least interesting. The backdrop is almost non-existent, and the train minimalist to say the least! The thugs are rather jerky too, almost



MARTY ON GEAR

Although no Game Gear version is planned, we did throw Marty through the Master Gear convertor – a big mistake. The game becomes very unplayable on the small screen, with it seeming even less responsive because of the tiny graphics. The second stage is incredibly frustrating as it requires very accurate throwing of the plates – which the small screen makes very difficult. Finally, the sound is a lot worse through the tacky GG speaker.

inanimate really, with just arms moving to throw their knives at you.

The tune's right out of Casey Jones (chuff-chuff!), as are the sound effects. Although there's not much to the least level, it's still rather playable. Making your way across the train you have to avoid signal boxes and mail-bag hooks, adding to the addictiveness of the experience.

Above: hope you make it across that pit, Doc, or Clara is going to take rather a nasty (not to mention fatal) tumble. Inset: whoops! Too late, there she goes. Goodbye for ever, darling!

MARTY ON MEGA

The Mega Drive version of *Back to the Future III* has just been finished. The game should be available now, and apparently just has enhanced graphics and sound – still the same amount of content. Give Acclaim a ring for more information.

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Nice statics, cowpoke.
- ▼ Not entirely flicker-free though.

77

SOUND

- ▲ Dolly Parton eat your heart(s) out!
- ▼ Very beepy, no depth to the tunes.

76

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Stages contain loads to keep you busy.
- ▼ Collision detection is a bit russy.

81

CHALLENGE

- ▼ It starts hard then gets easier.
- ▼ And it's soon completed.

70

It relates to the film, but is far too short and easy.

PROSCORE 73

PROFILE	BACK TO THE FUTURE III ● ACCLAIM ● £TBA ● OUT NOW		
	CART SIZE	2Mbit	SUPPLIER
	PLAYERS	1	Acclaim UK
	STAGES	3	4 Walcote Place
	SKILL LEVELS	1	Winchester
	FEATURES	n/a	Hants
			SO23 9AP
			(0962) 877788

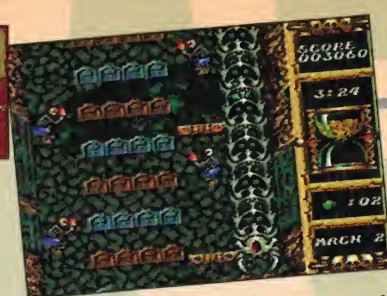
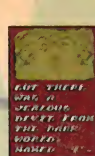
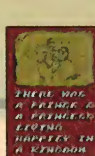


HERE LIES
CLINT EASTWOOD

DIED
September 1855
After a disagreement

Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess and a handsome prince... Yeuch! Well, that's the storyline, and that's the way it's got to be told! Anyway, these 'ere two royals were captured by an evil Demon, menacingly named Y (why?). Being anti-monarchist, he turns the two of them into stone paddles (he should definitely meet Fergie!).

Luckily for the two of them, an alien in the shape of a blue orb has come to their aid. If they can bounce him/her/it through all the levels, they may be able to force the Demon to return them to their previous human form. Then again, they may not.



Game Gear owners will instantly recognise *Bad Omen* as a previously released hand-held title. On the GG format, it was called *Devilish*, and, rather strangely, had more options, such as paddle configuration.

Bad Omen is a vertically- and horizontally-scrolling *Break-Out* variant. Innovations to the theme include 3-D perspective, level guardians, and bonuses to collect. While *Bad Omen* doesn't duplicate the screen

PRO TIP Beware of the bonuses marked "X". These make your forward bat insubstantial, allowing the ball to pass straight through it.

set-up of *Devilish* exactly, it's blatantly obvious that this is the same game, with a few minor changes.

A couple of nice intro screens surround the storyline which leads you into the game. Each level, of which there are seven, must be completed within a time limit, otherwise a life is lost. The only other way to die is when the ball falls below the lowest of the two paddles.

The levels have well-crafted backdrops. The second, for example, is a clock tower. Behind the massive cogs which your ball must traverse lies a Swiss clockmaker's dream. Miniature mechanics tick constantly as if to enhance the fact that your time is limited. Sprites are nicely coloured and fairly animate; my particular favourite being the toad that swallows the orb for a few seconds, regurgitating it like a fly he just didn't like the taste of!

A new feature is the ability for two players to team-up and play together against the evil one. Obviously more fun than playing solo, which is itself enjoyable enough.

The guardians vary enormously. A red devil is followed by a huge clock face, and next comes a tree-person who spits seeds which subsequently grow into smaller, and more annoying, versions of himself!

The in-game music complements the urgency of the game, being an up-tempo techno beat. Sound effects are also cool, from the zipper noise to the menacing Thriller-style graveyard sounds.

When it comes to the crunch, though, *Bad Omen* is a touch too easy for a Mega Drive game, suiting the Game Gear rather more. A snazzy *Break-Out* game with plenty of variety, but just not enough challenge.

● James "Batty" Scullion

Bad Omen



A creature from your worst nightmare awaits you at the end of each level. Clever positioning of the bats (unlike here) will make the multiple hits that much quicker, so you stand less chance of dying. At least you have plenty of time left to do it the hard way.

PROFILE

BAD OMEN ● HOT B ● £34 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 7
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER
Console Concepts
The Village
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1QB
☎(0782) 712759

GRAPHICS

▲ Plenty of colour and variation.
▼ Not the most defined graphics around.

79

SOUND

▲ Buzzing and banging theme tune.
▲ Zzzzz! Rather unusual effects.

78

GAMEPLAY

▲ Smooth, well-programmed movement.
▼ No enhancements on 8-bit version.

80

CHALLENGE

▲ Just right for younger Pros.
▼ Experienced Pros will probably find it too easy.

70

Playable addition to the ever-growing *Break-Out* collection, but too easy.

PROSCORE 78

SEGA pro

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SegaPro is on sale the second Thursday of every month at all good newsagents. The December issue (priced £2.25) is on sale from November 12th and features a fabulous 100-page book detailing the top 100 Sega games of all time. Don't miss out on the action. Reserve your copy at your local newsagent now. In case you have difficulty finding SegaPro on the shelves – it sells out fast – phone Paragon Publishing Ltd on 0202 299900.



Holy Mega Drive, Batman! Yes, the Dark Knight is back, and to coincide with the movie/software tie-in of *Batman Returns*, Sega have decided to officially release the previously import-only Sunsoft game *Batman*!

Battle your way through the Axis Chemical Factory, and dunk Jack Napier in the vat of acid. The very same vat that transformed Jack forever, and spawned that arrogant, vain and maliciously twisted genius, The Joker! (That fateful day that changed your life forever!)

Remaining in Gotham, The Joker became the biggest thorn in your Bat-side, and it's up to you to free the streets from his reign of terror before the balloon (or balloons!) goes up! So c'mon, Bruce, get the body armour on, and prepare to fight! For truth, justice and the American way!

The spinning Bat symbol begins our story of love and hate, of life and death. And as it turns, we reflect on the life of millionaire playboy, Bruce Wayne! What prompted him to become The Batman? Was it the violent death of his parents on the streets of his home town, Gotham? Was it the subsequent knowledge that The Joker was responsible for their deaths? I guess we'll never know, but the fact remains; if events hadn't occurred in that particular order, it's a cert that Gotham City would now be completely controlled by the Mobsters!

We begin our story in the streets of Gotham City, making our way to the Axis Chemical Plant. On his way, Mafia hit-men attempt to stop Batman before he gets there. Jack Napier, as yet unblemished, has infiltrated the plant, and is attempting to rip off the place for his boss, Carl Grissom. The Batman gets there before the scam is pulled off, and in the attempt to halt the crime, Jack falls to his doom!

The next episode in our adventure takes place in the Flugelheim Museum. The Joker is planning a surprise art exhibition, and roving reporter Vicki Vale is the prime exhibit! The Batman must rescue her from his demented clutches! Once done, they dive into the Batmobile, and give chase to the fruity criminal! Armoured cars aplenty try to write off the Batmobile, but once past these minor irritations, it's up to Batman to dive into his Batwing, and save Gotham City from the poison-filled clown balloons the Joker has set free above the carnival! Our tale ends inside the hallowed walls of Gotham Cathedral. Here, the smiling one must once again fall to his doom, this time fatally!

Graphically, *Batman* the game is really in tune with its film counterpart. Between levels you get animated sequences that could have been digitised from the film, so realistic are they! The sprites all move with a fair amount of realism, particularly our hero! He appears onscreen in dramatic style, his cape billowing out parachute-fashion! He moves like he



ain't messin', and has a wide range of punches, kicks and jumps with which to dispatch the hoods! If these weren't enough he has several tools and weapons in his Bat utility belt,

heavily-tooled up with scimitars, bazookas and even armoured cars! The Joker's a bit of a let-down, though, as he just doesn't stand out enough from his heavies. Yeah, you know who he is alright, but where's that leering, jeering smile of his? This guy had the biggest stage presence of the movie, but here he's just too non-descript.

BATMAN

PROTIP If a jump seems too far,

don't forget you've got spring-lined Bat-boots! Hitting the

jump button twice in rapid succession gives you extra boost!



including a limited supply of Batarangs, and a Bat grapple hook for scaling walls, etc!

The bad guys come in several shapes and sizes, and while some rely purely on muscle, others are

The backdrops are straight outta the film, and seem to get better as you wind your way through the plot, culminating in the conflict on top of the cathedral, the setting of which has to be seen to be believed!

The music playing throughout, though not the original, is obviously inspired by the movie soundtrack. It's a moody (even gloomy!) rock beat that has its up-tempo moments, but remains an audio insight into the seedier sides of city life! The 45 sound FX are loud and meaty, and range from several varieties of explosion, to a multitude of collision noises

PROFILE	BATMAN ● SUNSOFT ● £TBA ● OUT JULY			
	CART SIZE	4Mbit		
	PLAYERS	1		
	STAGES	6		
	SKILL LEVELS	6		
	FEATURES	n/a	SUPPLIER Sega UK 16 Portland Road London W11 4LA (071) 7278070	

Sega wouldn't send us an official copy of *Batman* (must have been those *Sonic 2* pictures in last issue, eh?), so we had to get the equally brilliant import version from those up-and-coming child prodigies at Game World, Unit 54, Trading World, 131 The Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7HF. Tel: (081) 2980226.



BATMAN



Batman: the oldest swinger in town (sorry!). And here he goes with Vicki Vale hitching a ride. This section, like in the movie, is based in the art gallery.



Here you are right at the beginning of the game. Batman drops from the sky, with his cape billowing in the wind.



Like the old 8-bit computer versions, the driving section plays like a shoot-'em-up and is viewed side-on.



(such as fist on face!), which is exactly what you'd expect from an action game of this calibre.

Gameplay is great fun, but rather dated (the game did come out over three years ago!), although there's plenty of variety here! What with platform and beat-'em-up action, driving thrills 'n' spills, and a flying sub-game, you're really rather spoilt for choice! Play alternates between these formats, and manages to hold your attention for the full length of the game. The challenge comes in being able to adapt to the different styles of

sub-game at a moment's notice.

Batman grows progressively more difficult as you advance, and the odd (very odd!) level guardian does little to help your travels! Pitfalls await at every parallaxed twist and turn, and your life count, minimal to begin with, soon begins to look decidedly miserable. Releasing it officially is definitely one of Sega's smarter ideas this year, especially considering the obvious future success of the sequel, eagerly awaited here in the SEGA PRO offices!

● James "bustin" Scullion

GRAPHICS	91
▲ Animations straight outta da film!	
▲ Lovely backdrops and sprites.	
SOUND	83
▲ Dark music for the Dark Knight!	
▲ Pow! Kazoom! Kerrash! Masses of FX.	
GAMEPLAY	85
▲ Plenty of platform-leaping fun.	
▲ Holy multi-faceted software, Bat-dudes!	
CHALLENGE	87
▲ Well thought out difficulty curve.	
▲ Guardians are most troublesome.	
Excellent timing, classic gameplay, and no Robin (hurrah!).	85
PROSCORE	

The world has entered a time of conflict. The orcs, dwarves, elves and men are battling for total supremacy. This battle is slowly wasting the world, but a new player has entered the scene, the Watcher.

He has restored a temporary balance while awaiting a hero from the South. This hero will unite all the warring races by finding the four pieces of the Watcher's Tower Gem. Then, and only then, can the gem be returned to its rightful place and order and harmony returned to the land.

Sounds a bit of a tall order. Who could they possibly get to play that hero? He will need the brain of a professor and the brawn of a French rugby player. Unfortunately, they've only got you: the brawn of a professor and the brain of a French rugby player. Oh well, there goes the world...

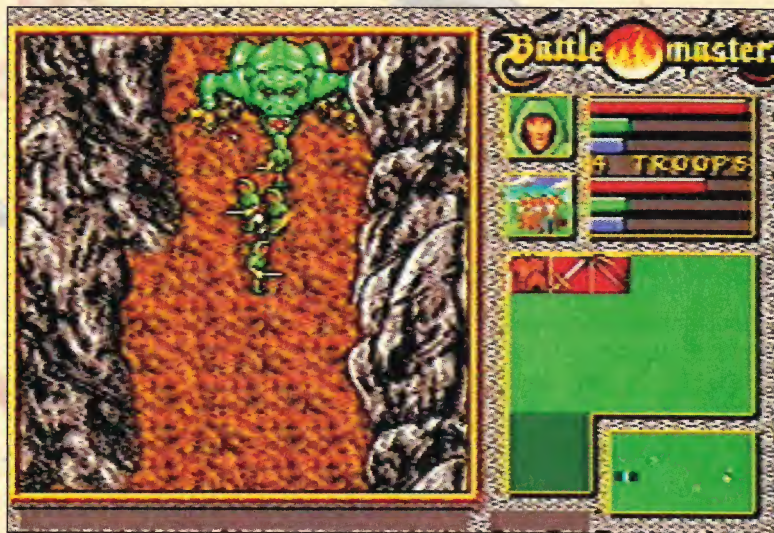


Just lately there seem to have been an influx of games that require a subtle blend of skill, strategy, level headedness and extreme violence. There was *Buck Rogers* and *Rings of Power* last issue, and now this issue we see *Warsong* and *Battlemaster*.

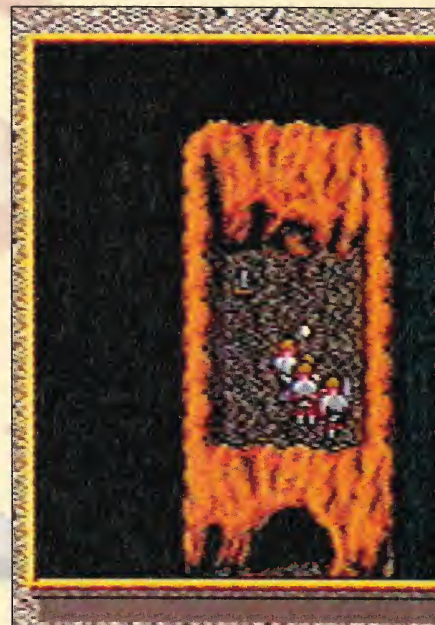
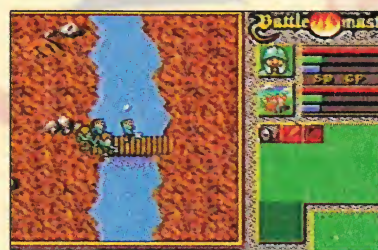
As RPGs go, graphics are the one thing that they shouldn't be judged on, which is just as well. Most of the locations look a bit samey with the only real distinction being between the inside and outside locations.

The inside locations are well created with a fair amount of detail. (There is no problem identifying which rooms are the armouries or the dungeons, for example.) But the programmers of *Battlemaster* has obviously kept everything small so that the screen could be packed with little characters. Outside everything is very sparse and functional. This works fine, but an RPG with decent graphics would be nice once in a while.

Similarly, music in RPGs often seems to be added as an afterthought, but *Battlemaster* has bucked the trend. There are five separate compositions that play depend-



One of the higher levels is ruled by a huge green dragon. The best method of beating him is to surround him and avoid his fiery breath and razor-sharp talons.



PRO TIP



Don't be brave, be sensible. Why lead from the front where you can get hurt when you can lead from the back and let your troops take all the stick.

ing on your location, although it all sounds like something Clannad might do.

Nearly everything is accompanied by a sound effect, but these aren't much special and are usually drowned out by the excellent tunes.

Generally, RPGs either bore you senseless within the first five minutes



or get you totally engrossed for hours. *Battlemaster* is definitely in the latter category. But there are a few flaws that limit your long-term enjoyment.

For instance, whenever you recruit more troops they have this annoying habit of wandering around when they hit a solid wall. This means you spend ages looking for them and getting them back to follow you.

Also, I found the level of difficulty between the first section and the second to be enormous, which is very off-putting for anyone with a short attention span.

In the game's defence, though, there are some useful options that allow you to restart from the level you died on or on any section

that you have already completed. There's also a password option, but if there was an award for the longest password, this game would win hands down with its 60-character access code.

Battlemaster is not up to the standard of *Buck Rogers*, but as RPGs go it does get you quite involved. £36 for an RPG is not bad going these days, so if you've always wanted to try one out, this shouldn't be too much of a risk.

● Les "Welly" Ellis

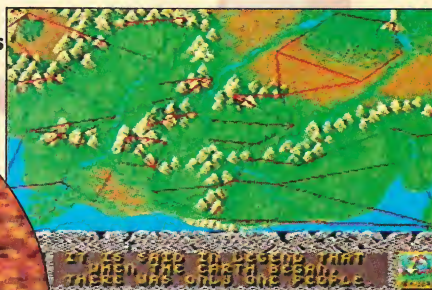
PROFILE

BATTLEMASTER ● ARENA ● £36 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 50 towns
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES password

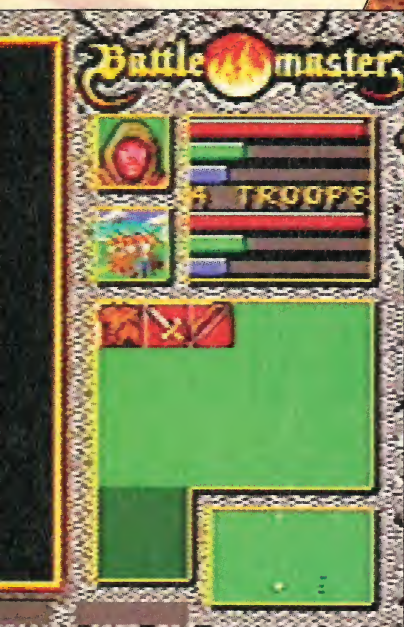
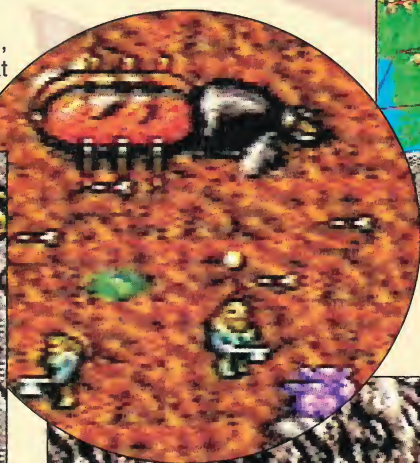
SUPPLIER

Console Concepts
The Village
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1QB
☎(0782) 712759



The world map (above) is shown before each new level; your ultimate aim is to reach the tower.

Level one (below) is the smallest land. The object, to kill everything in sight.



GRAPHICS

▲ Small but detailed characters and scenes.
▼ Often simple outside scene.

75

SOUND

▲ Some brilliant mysterious in-game music.
▼ A bit sparse on effects.

87

GAMEPLAY

▲ One of the easier RPGs to get into.
▲ Always a different type of game.

80

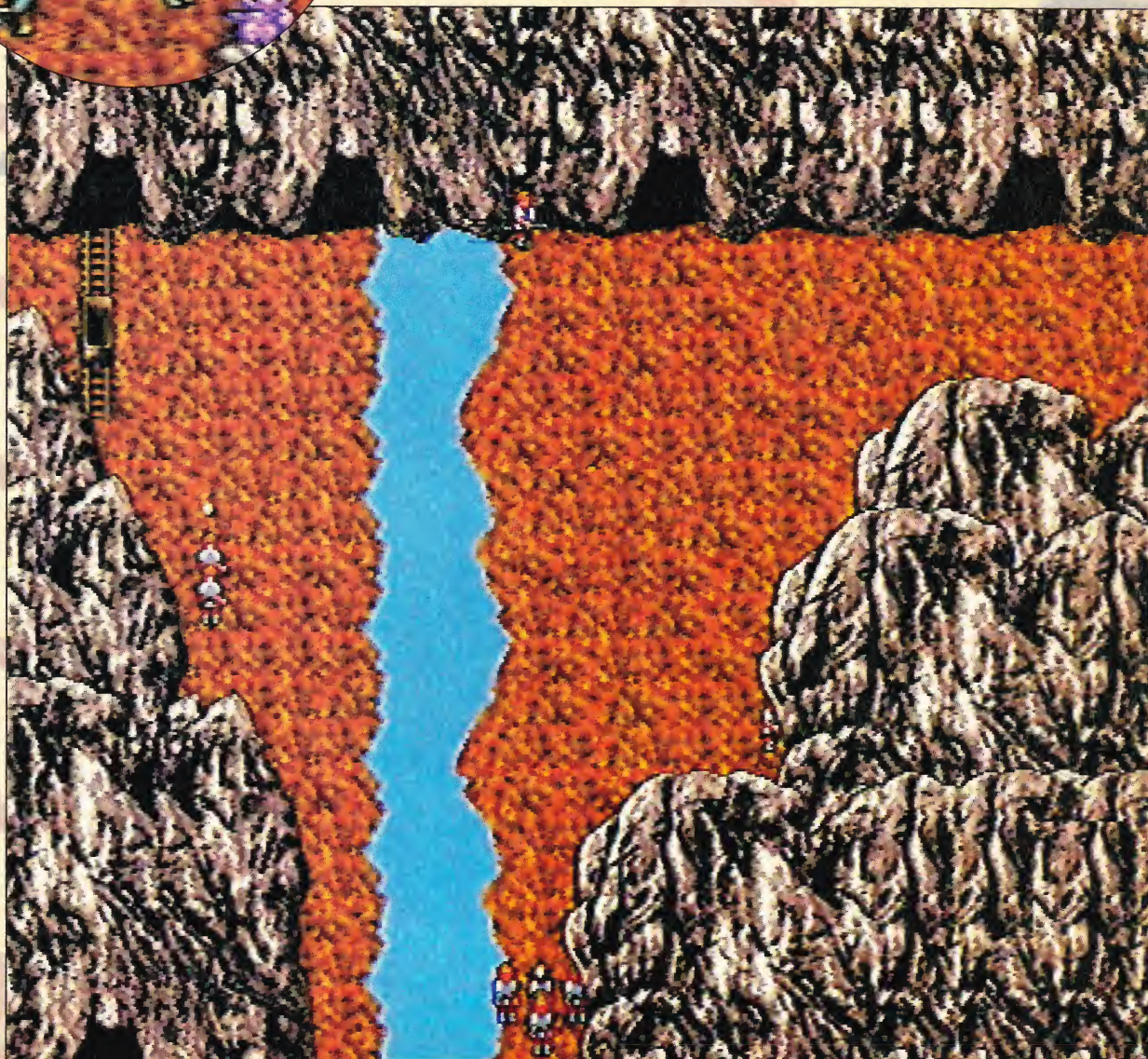
CHALLENGE

▲ Loads of towns and locations to explore.
▲ The later levels are very tough.

80

Great to see a cheap, welcoming RPG with decent presentation.

PROSCORE 78



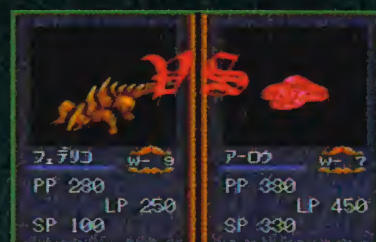
More violent than the SEGA PRO Xmas party, uglier than Damian with his designer scar and about as playable as a Timmy Mallet CD, welcome to the world of the *Beast Warriors*.

Climb into your monster fancy dress costume and slug it out with the ugliest creatures you have ever seen. These guys would look more at home in some film with Harry Harryhausen doing the effects (like Jason and the Argonauts). There are more beasts in here than in the freezer of the local Chinese take-away.

With the greatest monsters in the universe meeting for this mammoth contest, there's bound to be a lot of blood – make sure none of it's yours!



Possibly the worst beat-'em-up ever on the Mega Drive? Don't be fooled by the attractive graphics – this game is a real dog to play.



had a massive intro, with heads flying across the screen and arms being pulled from sockets, but there's absolutely nothing to get the adrenaline running, not even a pool of blood!

Game graphics are not

exactly what you would call extravagant. The two warriors, although well detailed, are terribly animated. When you do finally access a decent move, it only consists of a couple of frames of animation making the game look very inferior in the beat-'em-up genre. The combat arena is dull, containing little colour and nothing to look at. The addition of a crowd etc would have really increased the atmosphere, but this is sadly



bit hard to comment on – put simply, there isn't any. Generally, the fights take far too long to complete, and because of the lack of moves they soon become very repetitive.

Beast Warriors is an unusual game for Sega, it's a genuinely pathetic game. I mean, there have been some bad ones, but this one

BEAST WARRIORS



Beast Warriors is, personally, one of the biggest let-downs of the new year. With such a great name and the gory adverts that have surrounded it, you would imagine the ultimate blood bath, but right from the slightly out of focus title screen you just know that something isn't quite right. Ultimately, *Beast Warriors* is just plain and boring. A game like this should have

missing.

All the effects that accompany the moves usually consist of some sort of squelch, and the music is instantly forgettable. Playability in *Beast Warriors* is a

PRO TIP

Keep an eye on your status bar. When an A appears next to your score, hit c and aim straight at your opponent to knock him down.



takes the biscuit. If all else fails in a game, the two-player game is usually fun, but even that soon becomes a real bind to play. If you must get a monster fighting game, get *Fighting Masters* instead.

● Les "monster mash" Ellis

PROFILE

BEAST WARRIORS ● RIOT ● £38 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 16
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES versus

SUPPLIER
Console Concepts
The Village
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1QB
(0782) 712759



GRAPHICS

▼ Terrible animation on moves.
▼ Boring, plain background; no intro.

39

SOUND

▼ Laughable sound effects.
▼ Music to throw up to.

32

GAMEPLAY

▼ Boring and repetitive.
▼ Two-player game sucks.

24

CHALLENGE

▲ Long tough fights.
▼ But can you stay awake?

60

Don't waste your money on this piece of trash.

PROSCORE 30



BERLIN WALL

GAME GEAR

Whoever thought a game called *The Berlin Wall* could be this cute. To be fair, *The Berlin Wall* has absolutely nothing to do with the dissolution of the greatest symbol of the Cold War. Neither does it follow the lines of a tense German spy thriller. No, *The Berlin Wall* is a platform-style game in the vein of *Space and Alien Panic*.

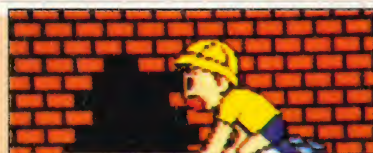
Your simple objective is to guide your hammer-wielding friend around screen after screen of intricate platforms avoiding the variety of colourful creatures and digging holes for them to fall into. Once trapped, you can smash their brains out in a distinctly tame fashion. The unfortunate goblins then turn into collectable goodies such as cakes (points) and a host of power-ups like a bigger hammer.

After a barrage of increasingly difficult levels, you must take on a larger deviant who can be anything from a wimpy ice demon to a manic purple radish with a deadly handbag!

You cannot fail to like this amazingly appealing and colourful arcade romp. The graphics are superbly colourful and humorous with a large and unrepentive range of aliens to contend with. Sound far exceeds almost every other GG game with over 30 SFX and a great tune to complement the wacky action.

The backgrounds are well designed to give the *Rainbow Islands* look and while they remain large and colourful, they do not detract from the

PRO TIP The guardians, beginning with the Ice Demon, need to have two holes dug side by side to fall into. Then hammer them down and trap them once more to finish them off. They only take two hits, but beware of the super weapons they use.



foreground antics. *The Berlin Wall* holds the same appeal as one of my all-time faves *Bubble Bobble*, with its cartoon graphics and monsters turning into bonuses.

All the guardians are huge and incredibly well animated. I loved the hedgehog and his high speed roll attack (sound familiar), and the robot with his uncontrollable flying sprockets.

What makes *The Berlin Wall* really stand out is the presentation. All too



What the hell's going on? For years, East and West Germans tried to get everyone to help them knock down the Berlin wall and no-one would listen. Now it seems the Japs are sending over a little boy and girl to help along the cause. Little do they realise, they are too late and the wall's disappeared. But all is not over as the wall has been infested by some very strange creatures and you must use your hammer to bash them on the head and send them back to Siberia where they came from.

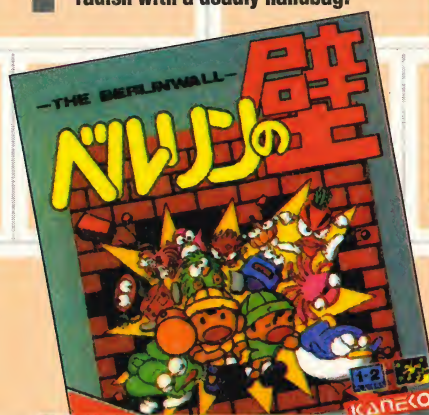
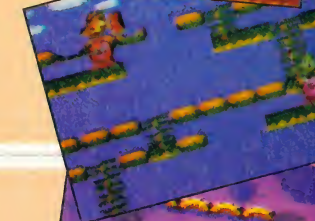
often a great game (*Ninja Gaiden* for example) is let down by a lack of options or levels, but *The Berlin Wall* has all this taken care of. There are loads of options such as a sound test and continues, and even a link game option for two GGs. Coupled with some cheerful statics to accompany the storyline, you really feel like you've got your money's worth.

And this game won't be completed overnight. The first levels are deceptively easy; in no time I was on the penultimate land. But as the final stages unfold, the challenge really increases; bosses get bigger, meanies are intelligent, and it wasn't long before my early optimism was dashed by repeated loss of life.

That's not to say that *The Berlin Wall* is not rewarding, it is. I found myself cheering when a stubborn screen finally faded to black and the multitude of bonus screens and shops really made it worth persevering.

With so much dross around, *The Berlin Wall* shines through as one of the best GG titles so far.

● Damian "stone walled" Butt



GRAPHICS

- ▲ The cuteness of *Bubble Bobble*.
- ▲ Great statics and varied levels.

93

SOUND

- ▲ Loads of quirky tunes.
- ▲ More blips than a US radar.

90

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ So easy to play and enjoy.
- ▲ Fast and cheerful.

94

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Once you play, you're hooked.
- ▲ Enough levels to get lost in.

89

Possessing all the addictive qualities of *Bubble Bobble*. Simply excellent.

PROSCORE 92

PROFILE

THE BERLIN WALL ● KANECO ● £24 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 25
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER
KC's Computer & Console Magic
3 High Street
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 1PY
(0509) 211799

Things hadn't gone too well for the crew of the Bio Ship: Paladin. First the big end went. Then they got stopped for speeding on the M25. Now, to top it all, the aliens have invaded – typical!

With nine areas to be negotiated, things looked bleak, till one of the technicians discovered that a collision with a blue ball of energy could stimulate the ship's bio-sensors and increase its size.

As the Paladin entered the first combat zone, the full scale of the odds became apparent. To even stand a chance of success, the ship's crew would have to become experts at using the front lasers, photons and the powerful super weapon. The enemy has pulled out all the stops to finish you off, and the sky is full of war machines.

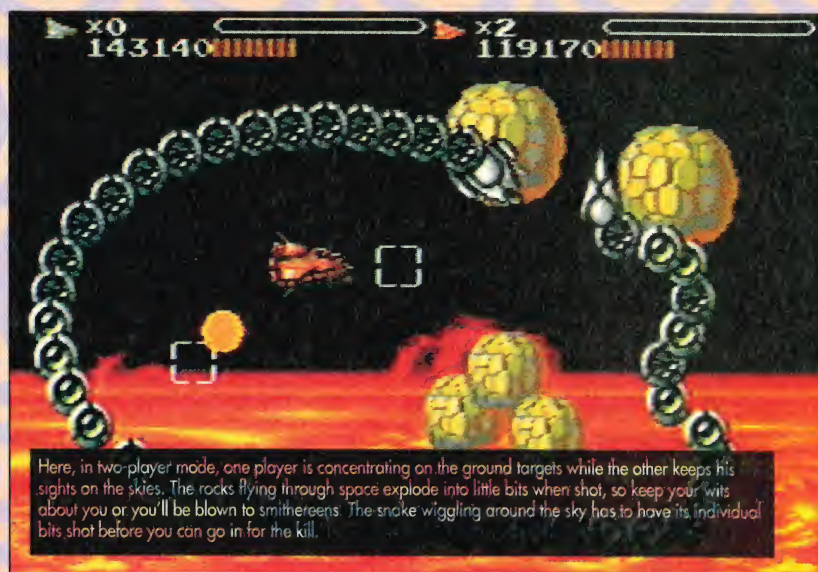
Live long and prosper – or, alternatively, get blown away in the first five minutes.

You get lulled into a false sense of security with *Bio Ship: Paladin's* decidedly ordinary introduction. The options allow the lives, level and control pad configurations to be changed as you would expect, but there is no fabulous music or title screen to accompany them.

Once you start the game, however, the graphics immediately impress with the first level taking place over a demolished city. Everything is superbly coloured and shaded, and things only get better. The sprites have been meticulously designed and drawn to be so realistic that you feel you're watching a movie. The warships at the end of each level are particularly noteworthy; they are the best I've seen in a long time. If you've seen HR Giger's artist's impressions for the *Nostromo* in *Alien*, then you'll notice a definite similarity.

The sonics continue to help the gory atmosphere, with a decent tune

PRO TIP Play *Paladin* in two-player mode for best results. Let one person use his front lasers and super weapon to take out the main bulk of the enemies. The other ship should be set on sights, taking out the turrets and ships.



Here, in two-player mode, one player is concentrating on the ground targets while the other keeps his sights on the skies. The rocks flying through space explode into little bits when shot, so keep your wits about you or you'll be blown to smithereens. The snake wiggling around the sky has to have its individual bits shot before you can go in for the kill.

PROFILE	BIO SHIP: PALADIN	UPL	£34	IMPORT
CART SIZE	4Mbit			
PLAYERS	2			
STAGES	9			
SKILL LEVELS	3			
FEATURES	teampay			
		SUPPLIER		
		Console Concepts		
		223b Waterloo Road		
		Cobridge		
		Stoke-on-Trent		
		Staffordshire ST6 2HS		
		(0782) 712759		

GRAPHICS	86
▲ Varied backdrops contain vivid colour.	
▲ Beautiful and original alien craft designs.	
SOUND	70
▼ Lack of original effects.	
▲ Acceptable tune plays throughout.	
GAMEPLAY	74
▼ Slowdown ruins great playability.	
▲ Brilliant two-player interaction.	
CHALLENGE	69
▼ Not enough stages.	
▼ Stages too easy for two players.	

The slowdown is so bad it completely ruins the gameplay.



playing throughout and satisfactory – although not very original – shooting effects. I did think that more could be made of the explosions and the arrival of the guardians.

With so many attractive features, you may question why *Paladin* has got such an average ProScore. The answer lies in its playability, or rather lack of it.

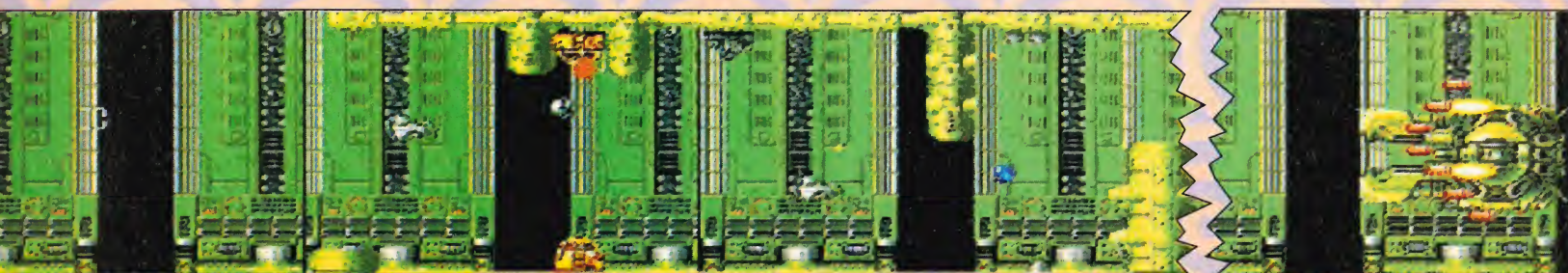
When both ships, plus a horde of aliens and their missiles, are on the screen, the action slows down terribly. The difficulty level is also set way too low. On two-player mode *Paladin*

was completed on the first attempt. With three continues, this game should have had at least 15 levels of increasingly difficult terrain. Instead, *Paladin* has nine levels that don't get difficult in any particular order and are very easy to complete.

● Damian Butt

PALADIN

BIO SHIP:



One of my all-time greats has finally been converted to a Sega and this means I can play it without arousing suspicion in the office.

Aesthetically, *Bubble Bobble* is very bland with just a logo and sparse options. Although, it's a pleasant surprise to see a password option added, although the game doesn't need it.

The graphics are super-colourful and an accurate conversion of the Taito coin-op. *Bubble Bobble*'s graphics always were simplistic, but the MS version seems to have included even more detailed secret rooms and fruity bonuses than any other version. If you have played this on the 16-bit computers, the first thing you will notice is the change in speed. Unfortunately, it is a lot slower but not so much that it is unplayable. On the contrary, *Bubble Bobble* is still as addictive as ever.

The sound that bashed a thousand heads is also back with a vengeance (you'll be humming it for weeks), and just about everything else is faithfully converted. The superb playability that made me such a big fan is marred only by the irritating flicker

on some of the enemy sprites. In some cases, it is so bad that the monsters can be nothing more than a spectre which can kill you without warning. You may also find that when you have the

PRO TIP



Look for the umbrellas. They are by far the most useful item to collect as different colours take you further on. For example, yellow is three screens, purple is seven. (Don't forget to get the three crystal balls on levels 10, 50 and 90 if you want to complete the game properly and get a special reward.)

Here's a lesson for all of you who don't obey the rules. Babby and Bobby were just two ordinary guys until they strayed off the path with their girlfriends while walking through Faraway land. Before they knew it, the girls were missing and they were turned into bubble-blowing dinosaurs. Now named Bubbien and Bobblien, the two heroes must venture forth through the 100 levels (and more, perhaps?) of the wicked witch to defeat her and retrieve their nubile prizes. The duo must capture the witch's evil henchmen in their bubbles and then burst them to oblivion. Only when every demon has been popped can Bubbien and Bobblien take on the witch herself.

BUBBLE BOBBLE

increased bubbles, the 8-bit flicker is appalling and betrays some sloppy programming. I was also dismayed by the fact that this game is made far too easy by the infinite continue option. Obviously, once you have sussed



Find the three crystals on the secret levels and you will receive a special reward when you finish level 100 - another 100 levels!



the few screens that really cause havoc, it is all relatively straightforward to complete. Even so, you'll be coming back to this even if you've completed it 100 times.

● Damian "Bubber" Butt

PROFILE

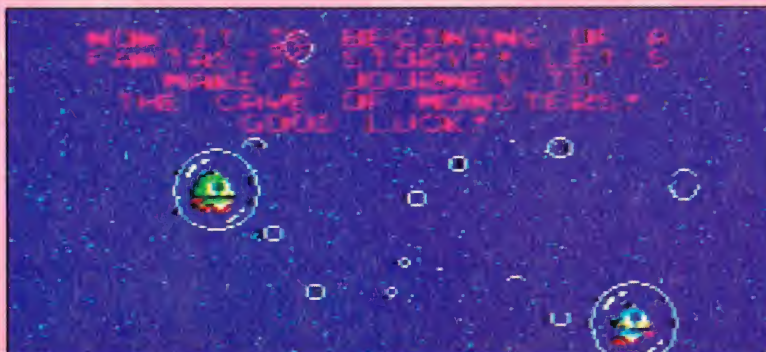
BUBBLE BOBBLE ● TAITO ● £29.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 200
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER
Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
(071) 7278070

SUPER CHARGED!

For the ultimate *Bubble Bobble* experience, play it through the Powerbase converter on a Japanese Mega Drive or through the Master Gear converter on the GG. Both the speed and flicker are improved, especially on the Game Gear which is the game's ideal home.



GRAPHICS

▲ Coin-op perfect!
▼ Shows about the terrible flicker.

77

SOUND

▲ Yes, that tune is back.
▲ Great chirpy SFX.

78

GAMEPLAY

▲ Still as enjoyable as ever.
▼ Speed can be a problem.

80

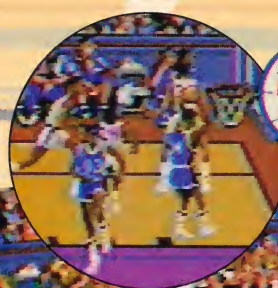
CHALLENGE

▲ 200 mind-blowing levels.
▼ Infinite continues are irresistible.

81

Too many lives and graphical defects, but still great fun.

PROSCORE 79



Being the shortest person in the office, we figured Les would be the ideal choice of person to see if *Bulls vs Lakers* really could allow the small man off the street to scale the heights of the NBA (National Basketball Association).

As the NBA Championships draw to a close in America (at time of writing), the glut of Mega Drive basketball games gets ever larger. Over the past few months, we've seen *Lakers vs Celtics*, *Arch Rivals*, *David Robinson's Supreme Court* (reviewed this issue), *Jordan vs Bird*, and currently in development, *Michael Jordan Flight*.

Bulls vs Lakers, as all basketball fans will know, is a replay of last year's NBA finals, between Chicago and Los Angeles. This year, the Bulls have once again reached the finals, but after a year stricken with injuries, the Lakers have failed to continue similar success.

So grab a seat alongside the likes of Jack Nicholson and Don Johnson and relive the 1991 finals.

With a burst of Mike Batlow's thumping rock soundtrack *Bulls vs Lakers* slams its way into the sports game limelight. With all the characteristics of every other EASN game (like *EA Hockey* and *John Madden 92*), this is definitely a game for fans of the sport. In fact it's a stat freak's dream; the manual is packed with those little numbers that to most people mean absolutely nothing, but

to real fans bring a genuine atmosphere to the game.

The court is viewed from a raised side angle scrolling horizontally – in fact the view is just like that from a spectator in the crowd. This view is probably the simplest way of doing it, but does lead to a couple of problems. When a player has the ball on the far side and has a huddle of players around him, you can't see who has got the ball and what he's doing with it. Also, as only half the court is



As we have come to expect from EASN releases there is a comprehensive video replay option available.

PROFILE	BULLS VS LAKERS ● ELECTRONIC ARTS ● £40 ● IMPORT			
	CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	Console Concepts
	PLAYERS	2		The Village
	STAGES	n/a		Newcastle-under-Lyme
	SKILL LEVELS	3		Staffordshire
	FEATURES	password		ST5 1QB £ (0782) 712759



Choose your team from the wide selection. On present form, I'd go for da Bulls.



Getting through the play-offs is no mean feat. Only the best and most consistent will survive.

displayed at any one time, you often don't know where your up-court player is on a fast break.

The animation on the very detailed players is jerky, but the court scrolling is fast and smooth. More importantly, even when all the players are onscreen there is NO slow down. Graphics between the games con-

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Big sprites and decent range of special shots.
- ▼ A few glitches in places and dodgy animation.

78

SOUND

- ▲ Great speech and a thumping title tune.
- ▲ Good squeak of trainers and bounce of the ball.

79

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Two-player mode is, as always, the best bit.
- ▼ Hard to get really involved in the play.

77

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Long championship season to get through.
- ▲ Some tough teams packed with NBA stars.

80

In the playoffs, but not quite a champion all-star player.

PROSCORE 78



The ref calls it fair and square – who does he think he's kidding?



PROTIP



Always try to keep your back to your opponent when you are in the shooting zone. This way he is more likely to foul you if he tries to get possession.

tain some great statics, and they are often accompanied by very comprehensive stats which are crucial to full enjoyment of the game. This, above everything else, shows the improvement on EA's previous team basketball game *Lakers vs Celtics*.

There's some excellent speech in this cart, and lots of it. Most of the ref's decisions are heralded by speech samples and during play if time is running short you'll hear a "Shoot it!" coming from your coach.

The title music is fine, a real heavy rock number fitting in with



all the other EA games. Thankfully, this doesn't continue into the game, the only noises being the rasp of the whistle and the squeak of the players' boots on the floor.

Bulls vs Lakers certainly shows the progression in basketball games over the years, but still has a few gameplay drawbacks. Overall movement is fast, with it only taking a few seconds to get from one end of the court to the other. The controls are easy to get to grips with, and you'll soon find yourself pulling off some amazing shots. Just watch Jordan's Air Reverse or the famed Monster Dunk – AWESOME! Batter still, there's a wealth of replay options which are great for reliving those great shots.

Sadly, *Bulls vs Lakers*' main drawback is in the gameplay. Quite often you feel as if you're not actually in control of a defending player. Sometimes you can just stand there, waiting for a charging foul, and the opposition will just run straight through you. Very infuriating.

On the whole, this is not quite up to the class of *David Robinson's Supreme Court* but is a valid follow-up to *Lakers vs Celtics* and still fun to watch and play.

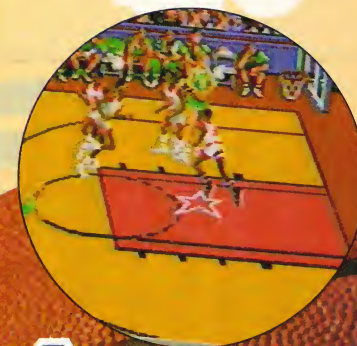
● Les "Dunk 'em" Ellis

HERE'S THE BULL

- The Chicago Bulls play in the Eastern Central conference of the NBA.
- Top Bulls players include Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Horace Grant.
- Michael Jordan earns around £20,000 per match.
- Jordan has won the most valuable player (MVP) for the last two years running.
- The Bulls won the NBA championship last year against the LA Lakers.
- They are in the final again this year against the Portland Trailblazers.

LICKING THE LAKERS

- The Los Angeles Lakers play in the Western Conference Pacific Division.
- Top LA Lakers players over the years include "Magic" Johnson, James Worthy and Kareem Abdul Jabbar.
- LA Lakers players have won the MVP five times in the last ten seasons. Johnson has won three of those.
- The Lakers have appeared in nine finals in the last 11 years. They have won five of those finals.
- Fans of the Lakers include Jack Nicholson, Chevy Chase, Don Johnson, Melanie Griffith and their most famous cheerleader Paula Abdul.



BULLS VS LAKERS

With a title like *Buster Ball*, you'd expect this game to be more about a certain well-known comic-strip character than a football variant, and you'd be wrong. This is cyber-football, played by android arthropods with attitude.

Anyone who's played the fabulous *Speedball* in its many incarnations will immediately recognise many parallels between the two, although there are several wildly different features too.

Played on a metallic surface, your team of robotic insects must score more goals than their opponents or participate in the dreaded dance of the dying fly.

With plenty of hazards to avoid, a huge playing area, and tooled-up adversaries, it's not gonna be easy. So come on, get scuttling, man!

BUSTER BALL

There's plenty of variation in this game, and most of it's in the options menus. With three pitch set-ups, nine teams and six pitches to choose from, you're really spoilt for choice.

Once past these and into the game, the fun begins. There are several sectors to each pitch, all cordoned off from each other by electrified fences. With the two men in each sector, it's a real challenge to pass the magnetic ball through all sectors to the goal.

PRO TIP Have a couple of matches in the training mode before you mess with the big boys, otherwise they'll teach you a lesson you won't forget in a hurry.

Graphically, *Buster Ball* is quite slick. The studded-metal playing surface is really well-designed, and has an attractive shadowed 3-D bas-relief effect. The players, although small, are intricately drawn and easily distinguishable from each other, and the constantly-rotating ball seems to emerge from the screen when thrown high in the air.

The sound is a variation on the pseudo-random theme we've come to expect on the Game Gear, and as you can imagine is in no way innovative, but provides light relief from the frenetic gameplay. Whistles blow for



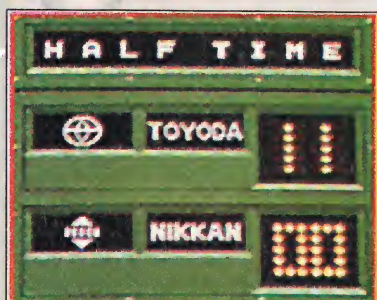
Who you gonna call? Ball Busters! Here they come - watch out!



Here you can choose your team, and define their various attributes.



Wallop! It's there! Nine points in the bag, but sadly no bonus this time.



time-outs and fouls and collisions have explosion sounds, and that's your lot!

Competing is a fast affair, there's no time to spare as your opponent (computer only unless you link-up with another GG owner) constantly bombards your goal-mouth with rocket shots. Goalies are non-existent in this game, so defence is definitely a wallword.

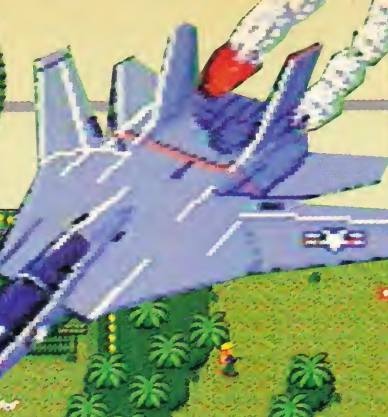
Buster Ball is, for the Game Gear, a relatively innovative game. Loads of pitch set-ups and plenty of teams add to the lastability, but unless you set the match time to the shortest duration the yawnies are going to invade in no time at all. A fair game, it's nowhere near the turkeys at the bottom of the heap, but in my book fails to excite enough to warrant a serious look.

● James "gonad" Scullion



PROFILE	BUSTER BALL ● RIVERHILL ● £24 ● IMPORT	
	CART SIZE	2Mbit
	PLAYERS	2
	STAGES	3
	SKILL LEVELS	1
	FEATURES	link-up
	SUPPLIER	Console Concepts The Village Newcastle-under-Lyme Staffordshire ST5 1QB ©(0782) 712759

GRAPHICS	80
▲ High-definition play area.	
▲ Well-coloured combatants.	
SOUND	51
▼ The tune is very familiar.	
▼ Effects are unoriginal.	
GAMEPLAY	73
▲ Interesting future sport for the GG.	
▼ Little variation.	
CHALLENGE	75
▲ Perfect difficulty level for all players.	
▼ Seen bores through lack of content.	
Just a poor man's <i>Speedball</i> for Game Gear owners.	
PROSCORE	73



April '72, the Vietnam war. Captain "Windbreak" Addis and his squadron of jet fighters are ambushed while inspecting a sleepy village at dawn.

Due to a reconnaissance error, misinformed by their superior officers as to the village's fire-power capability, they hit some heavy flak on entering their first strafing run. Addis's men request a mission abort, but gung-ho Windbreak denies their request, so in they go.

Sustaining heavy losses, he orders a retreat and re-group back at base. Suddenly a ground-to-air missile rips into his fuselage, knocking out his engines! Radioing for help, he finds himself outside the range of any friendly contact. A crash is imminent, and the bold Captain has no option but to eject.

As Captain Addis, you must make your way through heavy foliage and heavy fire, without sustaining fatal damage, napalming everything that moves, in an attempt to reach your rendezvous.



Oh what a tear-worthy sight greets you on the titles. It's your crate taking a dive into the forest, watched by you from your parachute! But there's no time to daydream, as soon as you hit the ground, it's into the game proper.

Calibre .50 is the latest in a long line of *Commando* clones, most recent being *Undecline*. But it reminds me most of the series of *Rambo* games; the scenery is mostly impenetrable jungle and cleared areas, with miniature Viet-Cong attacking in swarms!

The scenery itself, although different on each level, is rather uninteresting. The ground is a yellowy-green stippled effect designed to look like sand, and the trees are all clones of each other. Buildings and out-houses aren't too bad but still lack any variety.

The inhabitants come in several rather intelligent varieties, from civilian farmers to accurate rocket-



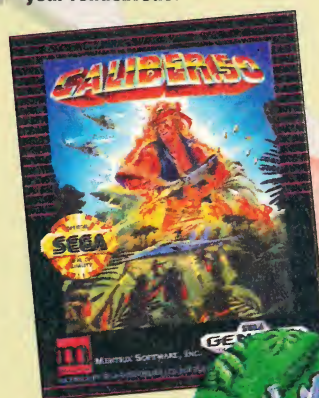
This energy bar denotes the strength of your weapon. Next door, your grenade count.

Here we see the paltry amount of lives you've got left, and the even-simpler score you've amassed!



Plenty of power-ups for your weapon scattered about here. Each grenade icon counts as ten, so don't hang about, go get 'em!

Let's have a look what's in the box! Power-ups, no doubt. There's loads of these boxes about. Look in all of them!



PRO TIP

Shooting a VC results in him leaving behind a rotating orange disk. Collect these



for extra shot power.

launchers. But just remember, they're all VC, so shoot first and ask questions later.

Power-ups, apart from being rather necessary, come in all shapes and sizes, with machine-guns, rocket-launchers and flame-throwers forming part of your repertoire.

Soundwise there's not a lot to talk about. The tune's a pretty standard computer-generated sound, while the explosions and gunshots aren't too bad.

Calibre .50 is a fairly playable game. "Windbreak" is easy to control in all eight directions, and his weapon fires continuously, so really it's just a case of moving through the levels avoiding enemy fire. This leads to the criticism that the game is really a rather shallow conversion of a tired,

over-used format. A complete waste of time in my opinion.

● James ".44 Magnum" Scullion

PROFILE

CALIBRE .50 ● MENTRIX ● £27 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 5
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
Kingbit Games
The James Thin Building
57 George Street
Edinburgh
EH11 2DA
(031) 2257682

GRAPHICS

▲ Intriguing plane crash sequence.
▼ Boring trees and sand surface.

60

SOUND

▲ Gunshots and explosions are fair.
▼ Hopelessly bad tune.

64

GAMEPLAY

▲ Sprite control is accurate.
▼ Severely lacking in originality.

62

CHALLENGE

▲ Level guardians are extremely difficult.
▼ The rest of the game is quite the reverse.

70

Unoriginal, unattractive, but playable. Very unexciting.

PROSCORE

63

Join the Cadash bash, same old story but new characters. Yet another beautiful princess has been kidnapped by yet another evil wizard and yet another loving father has put up a reward for yet another brave hero to rescue her.

The players in this blood-fest are Salassa, who plays the innocent princess taken in by the charms of the evil Balrog. Her father Dirzar has hired you, ace sword- and staff-swinger extraordinaire.

To encourage her rapid rescue, King Dirzar has put up a bounty for each demon you destroy. This is just as well for you'll need a bit of money to purchase extra weapons and armour along the way. You should also heed the advice of the many people you will meet along the way.

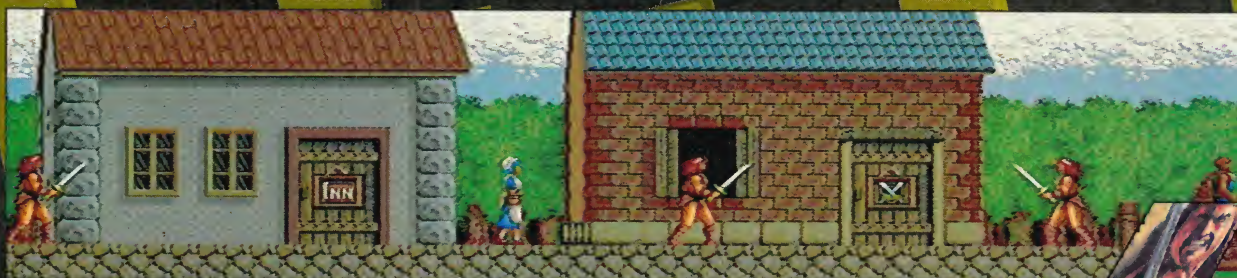
So say your farewells and prepare for the pits of demons you are about to enter.

The programmers of *Cadash* certainly love their full screen effects. It's the first thing that strikes you; the screen shimmering, shaking and then disintegrating to nothing as you enter the character selection screen. Both of your pixelated representatives are large, colourful and beautifully shaded. The fighter is a man of immense physique who wields a large sword but cannot handle any magic. Or you may choose The Mage whose wisdom and magical powers can be of great use in a battle, but don't even think about giving him a sword.

The first thing you notice as you travel to the first level is that all the backgrounds are big, bold and colourful, especially in the village.



Wearing a rather neat pair of boots, the warrior hero crosses this seemingly harmless bridge. Before he knows it, the ceiling starts collapsing and spiders dangle onto screen. Luckily our hero doesn't suffer from arachnophobia but the webs will slow him down.



Halfway through the first level you will venture inside a dark, dank cave. Here you encounter some extremely unfriendly bears who try to stop your quest right there.

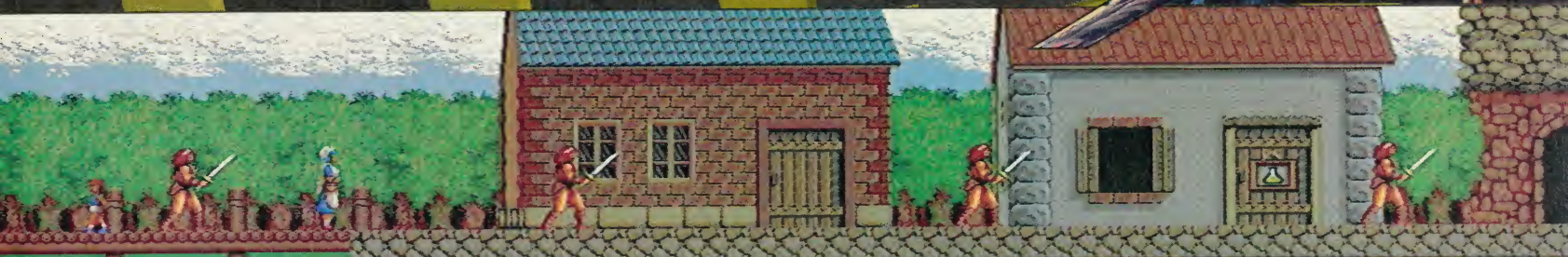


I may be paranoid but I can't shake this feeling that I'm being watched.

Similarly, all the characters are a tad on the humungous side, with the exception of the dwarves of course. Large sprites means they are intricately detailed and beautifully



As the warrior, a man of mighty strength and extensive sword skill, you descend the rope to avoid the skeletons who are throwing bones at you. Inset is the other character you can play, the mage. He isn't much good in combat, but casts some wicked spells.



Walking through the town you can buy weapons and medicines to take with you on your travels. The medicine restores your energy in combat. Weapons consist of many swords of various sizes.

PRO TIP



When you confront the Black Pudding, wait until he falls down from the ceiling and hit him four times as he advances. He will go back up and drop little puddings on you. These are easy to sneak under, so get to the other side and repeat the whole process.

squelchy, especially when you make contact with one of the demons. Sadly, they're limited to a few samey sounds, with the atmosphere being created mostly by the music. There are loads of tunes constantly changing to suit the environment. They range from deep, dreary tunes in the caverns to light, poppy tunes when you skip through the villages.

Unfortunately, the gameplay fails to keep up with the high aesthetic standard of *Cadash*. As is the case with most beat-'em-ups, unless they have an amazing array of brilliant moves, things can get very boring and repetitive exceedingly quickly.

The addition of interaction with some of the characters you meet is a neat idea, but most of them have very little to say. Usually when you meet someone, you spend most of your time hammering the fire button to get through the text and back onto the action.

Ultimately, you'll find yourself progressing through the five levels of



Kraken is one of the toughest guardians you will encounter, even though he lies at the end of level two. On his demise, you should travel right and rescue the princess. She will then take you to a pool and turn into a mermaid - that's gratitude for you.

PROFILE

CADASH ● TAITO ● £38 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 5
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER
Console Concepts
The Village
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1QB
©(0782) 712759

Cadash very quickly. The stages are short and just a bit of constant bashing is required to dispose of most demonic encounters. Games that mix strategy and arcade elements are always difficult to get exactly right. *Cadash* falls over by having easy arcade sections and RPG encounters that hardly tax the brain.

Exile (SEGAPro#9, 83%) did the job much better, but that too was very easy. It just goes to prove the old saying, you can't have brains and brawn.

● Les "Shredder" Ellis

GRAPHICS

▲ Large characters adorned in glorious colours.
▲ Backgrounds packed with detail and depth.

84

SOUND

▲ An abundance of atmospheric music.
▼ Limited sound effects for fight scenes.

73

GAMEPLAY

▲ Two-player mode adds real spice to the action.
▼ Essentially simple and monotonous.

65

CHALLENGE

▲ First level is a real toughie.
▼ But it gets easier from then on!

62

Not enough challenging content to warrant the high price.

PROSCORE

65

Graham and the lads will be out in Sweden later this year defending the English honour and striving to win the European Championships against the might of the Germans, French and the dubious tactics of the Italians.

Now you will be able to feel the pressure, hear the roar of the crowd, and receive all the glory as Tecmagik bring the glamour of the European Championships, UEFA 92, to the Master System.

Out of the 34 teams, there can be only one winner, and with England getting to the semis in the World Cup, we stand a damn good chance of bringing home the silver.

You may already have World Cup Italia or Super Kick Off, but this promises extra features and more playability. Game on...

Straight from the animated sequence featuring the UEFA rabbit mascot, Berni, you get the feeling that this is no ordinary football game. And with the wealth of original features, you're certainly not disappointed. But although you get loads of neat touches, you don't get the multitude of options seen in *Super Kick Off*. However, this is certainly not to the game's detriment as *Kick Off* lacked the gameplay content that *Champions of Europe* most definitely has.

Every team in the forthcoming UEFA 92 championships is here, and you can choose to play any one of the 34. The choice is made by a leg pointer which changes the colour of its strip as you pass over the countries - a nice touch. One or two players can compete in single matches or even in the tournament, combining matches versus each other and against the computer. The game duration can be selected as well



pro!
YO!



Choose your team. From all over Europe the best teams converge for the ultimate challenge.

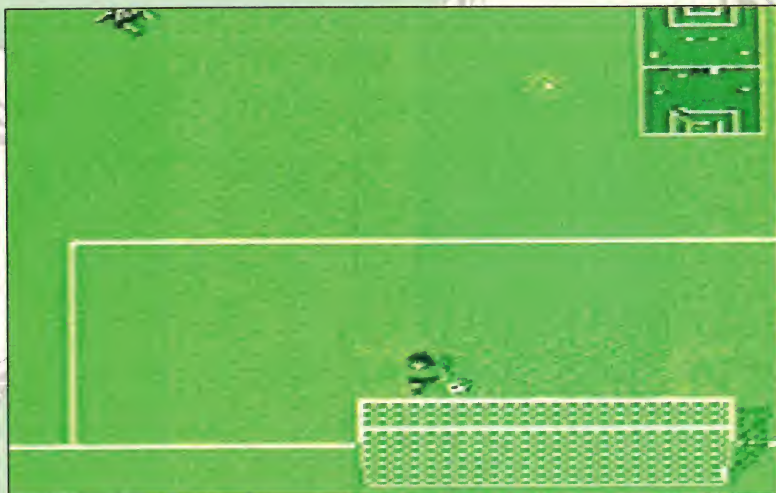
Maybe not the wealth of options as in *Kick Off* but still a cracking game. When you select the tournament your groups and placings are shown.

as the referee, all of which have their own specific characteristics (which can range from being totally blind to some guys that obviously hallucinate).

PRO TIP When you're in possession of the ball and an opponent is racing towards you, chip the ball by hitting button ONE and he should come crashing into you giving away a free kick. Keep doing this and he'll get booked and finally sent off. It may not be sporting, but then again you are playing the Italians..



CHAMPIONS



This goalie must be Scottish. The ball was tapped straight at him and he let it go through his arms. Bit like Dave when he plays five-a-side, really.

Aftertouch (the ability to bend the ball) is also here, and you'd be wise to turn this on and perfect the option as soon as possible.

As you step out onto the pitch, you'd be forgiven for thinking you're playing *Kick Off* – but then football pitches are much the same the world over. The overhead view is undoubtedly the best option, so why not



The state of the pitch affects how the game is played. Wet pitch leads to problems, dry pitch means speed.

The controversial scanner: do you use it or don't you? You can locate it in any corner of the pitch you want.



The referee rushes onto the scene to pull the players apart and give his decision. Here the little fellow has decided that a foul has been committed and his decision is a free kick.

Crock 'im. The player broke free and got around your defender leaving him no choice but to bring him down in a brutal fashion (with a motorbike chain).

implement it? The players are also fairly small, but Ed Hickman, the programmer, has miraculously squeezed in more detail and smoother animation than seen on any other MS footy game.

Particular attention seems to have been paid to the goalmouth, and, let's face it, this is where the real action occurs. The area around the goal is all scuffed and looks as though players have really been diving around in it. For such a flat view, there's an excellent impression of 3-D.

The only real let-down is the sound. Admittedly, there isn't really a lot you can do in a football game, but the roar of the crowd jeering or cheering would have



added real atmosphere. All you get is the shrill referee's whistle and kick and bounce effects. Luckily, there's no naff music playing throughout the game though.

Super Kick Off was given an excellent review in *SEGA Pro*#3, even scraping a ProYol award, but it did have some flaws. The main gripe was with the control method which was very tricky and took a while to get accustomed to. I am glad to say that while the control method in *Champions of Europe* is similar, it has been improved immensely. It is

I'M FOREVER BLOWING BUBBLES



And keep your feet on the floor.



I'm sorry, ref, but I must humbly disagree with your last decision.



C'mon, ref, you can still get glasses on the National Health, y'know...



Yeeaaahhhhhh, 1-0. Ha! Bonus in the pay packet this week.



Look, The Simpsons are on at 6:30, can we get on with it?



And keep your feet on the floor.



Come on, stop wasting time!



I'm knackered. How long was

EUROPE



PAINT A PITCHER



There are two different surfaces in *Champions of Europe*, one dry (left) and one wet (right). On the dry surface, the ball tends to bounce higher and the action is faster but more controlled. The wet pitch can lead to all kinds of problems as the ball skids off the surface making the ball harder to control, just like the real thing. But sliding tackles are particular fun in the wet...

now very easy to trap the ball and allows you to pull off some quite incredible dribbling and shots. Like the Amiga version of *Kick Off*, *Champions of Europe* allows the skilful player to easily fool the keeper and still keep control. This alone makes the game far superior to MS *Super Kick Off*.

The tournament in *Champions* is tough enough to keep even the most hardened pad-basher sweating. The top two teams qualify from the individual groups to enter the final round proper. Here the pressure really starts as any little mistake can cost you the tournament. Each team gets progressively difficult as you move towards the final and to win requires much practise against various opponents.

What takes *Champions* beyond the normal boundaries set by footy games are the wacky features. For instance, you get a referee that runs all over the pitch keeping an eye on play and calling out his decisions via a speech bubble. The players also have speech bubbles, and when the ref gives a bad decision or a player gets fouled, you'll soon find out what the players have to say about it. And what happens when a player gets sent off is unprintable...

Despite the fact it doesn't have the options of *Kick Off*, *Champions of Europe* is a brilliant football game, unsurpassed on the Master System.



The action can get pretty hairy around the goalmouth as the goalie rushes out and you can take the ball around him.

PROFILE	CHAMPS OF EUROPE	TECMAGIK	£TBA	MAY/JUNE
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1 or 2			
STAGES	n/a			
SKILL LEVELS	n/a			
FEATURES	versus			
		SUPPLIER		
		Tecmagik		
		1 Norland Place		
		London		
		W11 4QG		
		©(071) 2432878		

CHAMPIONS ON THE GEAR

As there are no plans at present to convert *Champions of Europe* onto the Game Gear, hand-held owners will have to be satisfied with playing the game via the Master Gear converter. At first this is a daunting prospect as the players seem so small, but it doesn't take long for your eyes to get accustomed to it. When they do it is surprisingly easy to play.

The biggest problem is with the text. It is so small, it is barely readable. If you are one of those people who has taken a file to your converter to allow the Gear to use a magnifier as well, then you are quids in. Even with these flaws, it's still better than *Kick Off* for the Game Gear.

MS owners enticed by the management tactics of *Player Manager* et al on computer formats will be disappointed at the lack of such team customisation, but this is the Euro Championships after all and not much player swapping goes on.

Above all, *Champions of Europe* is the most playable and visually exciting game on any Sega, and if that isn't recommendation enough to buy it you need your head examining.

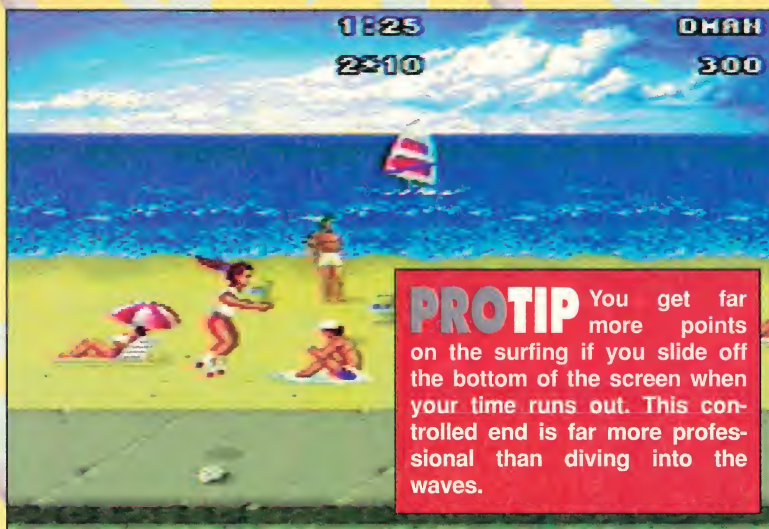
● Les "hand of God" Ellis



GRAPHICS	90
▲ Delicious intro sequence.	
▲ Great background on the options screen.	
SOUND	56
▲ Whistle, kicking and bounce effects are fine.	
▲ No crowd roar.	
GAMEPLAY	92
▲ Very competitive due to high speed action.	
▲ Sensible control method encourages play.	
CHALLENGE	93
▲ Even as a strong team, it's not easy.	
▲ Progressive difficulty through the rounds.	
Kick Off is history, this is THE essential Sega football game.	
PROSCORE	92

With the prospect of so many exciting and original events all portrayed with Mega Drive graphics, how could this fail to be a hit? Well, for a start, the front end is severely bogus and some famous features have been omitted. A yawnaramacity title screen set against a mottled blue canvas looks classy but does not match the atmosphere of the sports, which are colourful, vibrant and flamboyant. I was also annoyed to find that the judges screen, previously showing a mixture of whacked out characters holding up the score cards, was completely missing. Instead, what faced me was yet another blue screen. Most heinous.

The graphics are by far the best yet, with pixel-perfect events staged



PRO TIP You get far more points on the surfing if you slide off the bottom of the screen when your time runs out. This controlled end is far more professional than diving into the waves.

Mondo awesome, dudes! California Games has at last surfed, skated, BMXed, sacked and half-piped onto the Mega Drive in glorious style.

Being a righteous funkmaster of the sands, you must compete in each event with the all-time goal of perfecting every move and scoring the highest points. Whether you're riding the crest of a wave or performing spectacular aerials on your board, the competition's gonna be super tough. You can't afford to let up for a second otherwise, blip, you're biker meat. So get into your sun-bleached shorts, find your most reflective neon shades and fill your cooler; it's time to hit the beach.

with faithful adaptations of the tried and tested originals.

The options are comprehensive as always, with up to nine players competing, but the way only foot-bagging and half-pipe are two-player simultaneous is a complete waste. The Lynx version proved that every event

could be linked up and the playability was extended indefinitely. Unfortunately, MD *California Games* falls short on sheer

Many thanks to the surf bums at KC's for slipping us with this scorching release despite large advance orders at £38 a throw. You can contact them at KC's Computers & Console Magic, 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1PY. The dudeline is: (0509) 211799



PROFILE

CALIFORNIA... SEGA £39.95 OUT NOW

CART SIZE	4Mbit
PLAYERS	9
STAGES	5
SKILL LEVELS	1
FEATURES	teamplay

SUPPLIER

Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA

(071) 7278070

in vivid colours combined with super-smooth animation that brings the whole game alive. There's some great detail, especially on the skating and half-pipe games where a busy highway and a packed beach pro-

surfing, but some of the others do get tedious after a while, and I'm not convinced that there is any point to the skating which everybody here hated.

Soundwise, the tunes are great

gameplay and is robbed of any long-term challenge by the programmers' limitations. I'm one of *California Games*' greatest fans but this version didn't stimulate the surf burn in me, that's for sure.

● **Damian “bum” Butt**



GRAPHICS

- ▲ All events are stunning.
- ▲ Very smooth and crammed with detail.

93

SOUND

▲ Faithful tunes throughout.
▼ Lack of sport effects and crowd.

81

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ All events are playable.
- ▼ Some unresponsiveness means anguish.

80

CHALLENGE

▲ Variety of action is compelling.
▼ But playability is too shallow.

71

Surf dudes will be able to relate, but there's no long term challenge.

PROSCORE / 0

CHASE HQ.

"Message from Nancy at Chase HQ. The Ripper has escaped his cell and is on the run". Those are the words that launched a thousand car chases in the arcades on Taito's classic cop chase coin-op.

New York has a disease: crime. The police have lost control and the city has turned into a safe haven for all the unsavoury criminals that America has kept in the underworld for so many years. From spies to kidnappers, armed robbers to terrorists, they have all come to New York.

To combat this problem, the NYPD has set up a special division under the codename Chase. The Formula One ace, Tony Gibson, along with his side-kick Ray Brody, are in charge and must chase through the streets to catch the villains. With Nancy at Chase HQ, and time ticking down, you must jump into your fully fuelled Porsche 928S4 and save New York.



Chase down this game from KC's Computer and Console Magic, 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire. Tel: (0509) 211799. For £24.95 you get your own Porsche and no insurance worries.

The concept of *Chase HQ* is basically the same as *Out Run* with one or two added features. While most of the time you spend speeding through city streets, there are times when decisions have to be made, like choosing which car parts you want or which direction to go at an intersection. There are also some great statics, especially in the garage and on the stage map that shows you your course.

The in-game graphics are fairly simple, resembling *Out Run*. Unlike other versions of *Chase HQ*, the programmers have gone to great lengths to ensure the accuracy of the car sprites. All the sports classics are included, even a Lotus



Esprit. To keep the speed up, the backgrounds are kept fairly simple, with simple skyscrapers and mountains scrolling horizontally in the distance.

Sound is genuinely annoying. The two tone engine drone is appalling, and when that siren starts going, get ready to leave the room...

Luckily, the little ditties between the levels are a small saving grace.

Above all, *Chase HQ* is a fast game to play. The road racing stage is certainly frantic as you desperately try to avoid the traffic and other obstacles. Once you have sighted your target, you get great satisfaction from trying to ram them off the road.

Sadly, the play soon gets very repetitive. You just perform the same process again and again and after a very

PRO TIP



When you've sighted the enemy car, try to ram him from the side and not behind. If you knock him from behind you'll lose all your speed and he'll get away. If you hit him from the side, you'll retain your speed and ram him more times.

short while you've had enough. Pity really, because I quite liked the arcade game.

● Les "chase me" Ellis



GRAPHICS	83
▲ Fast moving chase sequences.	
▲ Accurate detail on all five sports cars.	
SOUND	57
▼ Instantly forgettable music.	
▼ Arggh, the dreaded siren...	
GAMEPLAY	62
▲ Good race "n' chase option.	
▼ Too repetitive too soon.	
CHALLENGE	79
▲ Tough against the clock.	
▲ Very frustrating when you lose the enemy.	
Chase HQ looks dated, even with the GG's extra statics.	
PROSCORE	74

PROFILE	CHASE HQ	TAITO	£24.95	OUT APRIL
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	15			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	n/a			
		SUPPLIER		
		Sega UK		
		16 Portland Road		
		London		
		W11 4LA		
		(071) 7278070		

"Chess. The final frontier.

"These are the journals of the Spaceship Game Gear.

"Our mission; to seek out new software, discover new territories, and boldly go where no hand-held has gone before.

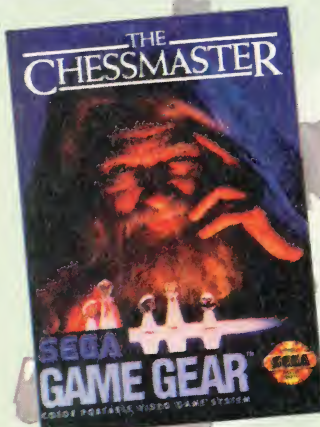
Janitor's log: stardate Friday the 13th.

"The Chessmaster has appeared on our minuscule monitor, and is invading our headspace. Hailing frequencies are open and the message is "Welcome to The Chessmaster". Dr Spot, analysis please!"

"Affirmative Captain. There seems to be an alien presence on ship. It seems benign and is offering us the pleasure of an ancient board game played by the primitive Earth-people. Extremely logical!"

"Data banks reveal that this particular game was revered by high-brow human-beings throughout their turbulent history. I shall attempt communication by engaging in play with this entity.

"Vulcan mind-meld commencing now!"



CHECK out our MATEs at Console Concepts for a copy of *The Chessmaster*. They can be found at Unit 18, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759. The price for an audience with the Master is £28.

PRO TIP

Always castle your King for maximum protection, not forgetting to move his surrounding pawns last.



The Chessmaster is an action-packed shoot-'em-up adventure game... and I'm the biggest tale-teller in the Universe!

No, the truth of the matter is, rather obviously, that this is chess for the Game Gear. And an extremely polished product it is too!

Hit the power button to on you are greeted with an extremely clear sound sample, "Welcome to the Chessmaster", and a really neat digitised picture of a rather formidable-looking old wizard. He sits, leering over his board, his hand quivering in anticipation, poised for that lethal check-mate.

The board itself is a bog-standard



"check", ultimately leading to the inevitable "check-mate".

The most staggering thing about this particular game is the veritable host of options screens. There's nothing that can't be tweaked. From

zero to two players, the control you have over your game is phenomenal. There's a helpful take-back mode, set up your own board, and load 'n' save functions amongst many others. The settings menu is also huge and has plenty of other helpful features including a level selector to handicap your digitised opponent and the ability to toggle rules I've never even heard of.

Chess-playing Game Gear owners, this is for you. If a tough game's your style, you'll get one. You may prefer, though, to be coached in the finer points of, say, *En Passant*! Either way you'll get your money's worth with *The Chessmaster*.

● James "Karpov" Scullion

THE CHESSMASTER



blue-and-white computer chess-board. All the pieces (black and white, of course) are easily distinguishable from each other and a hand sits floating mysteriously above them.

Once you choose your piece with your hand, it then picks the piece up and allows you to deposit it where you like, rules willing. The Chessmaster is extremely stringent on following the rule book as he has a library of 150,000 classic moves stored deep within his neural-network, so cheats will be zapped into null-space till they comply!

Samples accompany all moves, mainly consisting of "white", "black", "captured" (for a taken piece), and



It's game over for black here, white was just too good. This is just one example of the several informative messages that Chessmaster keeps you updated with throughout the game.



PROFILE	CHESSMASTER	SEGA	£27.99	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	2			
STAGES	1			
SKILL LEVELS	13+			
FEATURES	password			
		SUPPLIER		
		Sega UK		
		16 Portland Road		
		London		
		W11 4LA		
		(071) 7278070		

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Clear, well-defined pieces.
- ▲ The Chessmaster looks like *Culwaste*.

80

SOUND

- ▲ Lovely in-game samples.
- ▲ No irritating tune!

86

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ As fast or as slow as you like.
- ▲ Innovative hand icon.

79

CHALLENGE

- ▲ This guy's a real Pro.
- ▲ He welcomes beginners' though.

98

Quality stuff. The most comprehensive chess tutor you will get.

PROSCORE 83

Unga bunga! Everything was rosy in the Garden of Eden. Chuck was probably the happiest man alive (if not the *only* man alive) as he lived the simple life with his gorgeous cavegirl, Ophelia. Unfortunately, the evil Stone Age misogynist (ie, hater of marriage), Gary Gritter, envious of Chuck's good fortune, kidnaps the fair Ophelia, promising to do several extremely naughty things to her unless she submits to his overweight will.

Now Chuck, being an ape-man of action, just ain't gonna stand for that kind of foul play! He therefore sets out on a search to find Gazza over several levels of hostile terrain, beat his brontosauran brain in, and get Ophelia home again in time for T-Rex and chips!

Now I know why they call this game *Chuck Rock*. It has more to do with music than the throwing of stony projectiles. Immediately you turn on your Mega Drive, you're assaulted by an extremely funky groove, accompanied by the animated title screen, which shows Chuck and his band jammin' on down! Bass, lead, drums and keyboard player all flail their arms and legs about as they play. It's just a shame there's no guest appearance from Gary, singing "I ug, you ug, my only true ug, I ug, you ug, me ug!".

Options are limited to toggling the music and sound effects on and off, but I suggest you leave them both on as they're in no way distracting. Rather, they seem to enhance the feel of the game.

Graphically, *Chuck Rock* is spot on! The prehistoric backdrops, although cartoony, are fairly authentic. In the distance sit the obligatory volcanoes, shadowed by the primeval flora of the era, while the virgin sky is still ozone-blue.

Chuck himself, although looking



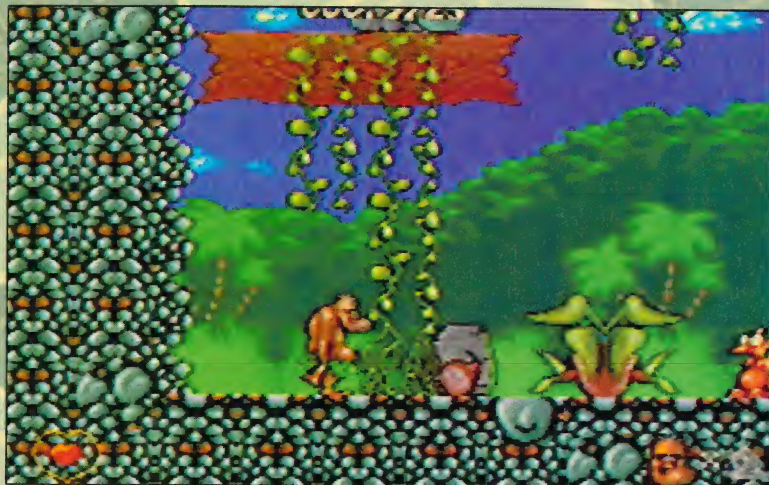
They don't call him Chuck Rock for nothing. The large boulder which he holds above his misshapen head can be utilised as a weapon against the unwelcome advances of jungle predators.

like he's just been hit with the ugly stick, is marvellously animated, swaggering along with his knuckles trailing on the ground. He can defend himself in several ways: unarmed, he can belly-punch his attackers à la Big Daddy, or give them a flying kick to their gruesome heads. He can also pick up rocks of varying sizes, which double up as weapons (you "chuck" them of course!), and also tools for solving some of the puzzle elements of the game.

The rest of the sprites come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from tiny dinosaurs that swell to ten times their normal size just before having you for lunch, to huge mammoths whose heads rise far above you in the clouds!

Chuck's on the ball in the sound department too. The in-game music is a funkster's dream, being an up-tempo funkadelic fusion. Sound effects are plentiful and range from Chuck's famous "Unga bunga!" to screams of agony and boings as he gets some air.





Chuck Rock doesn't just scroll horizontally. If you climb up the green vines, you will be taken to a totally new environment of platforms and clouds - it's a long way down if you fall!



Here you are seen way above the ground amongst the floating platforms. Hold on for dear life as even a fat slob like Chuck won't be able to bounce back from a fall of this magnitude.

PRO TIP

To get past the killer plants, you'll need a large boulder. Throw it in their midst, and then jump on it and over. Easy-peasy!



Playability is more pro than con, with spot-on collision detection, and attention to detail such as Chuck's inability to jump efficiently when carrying heavy boulders. As well as

jumping, he can walk, run, duck and even fly with the aid of a friendly pterodactyl! The levels are set out in several ways (some scroll from left to right and others go from down to up!) and have a fairly good difficulty curve. The only real downer about *Chuck Rock* is the unoriginality of the game. I have played several Stone Age capers across the formats in the past few months and they're all much of a muchness. Saying that, *Chuck Rock* is definitely a contender for the fur-clad, ax-wielding crown!

● James "Captain Caveman" Scullion



Ouch! Walk into the thistles dotted around the level and Chuck will be catapulted into the air.



PROFILE

CHUCK ROCK ● VIRGIN ● £TBA ● OUT SEPT	
CART SIZE	8Mbit
PLAYERS	1
STAGES	8
SKILL LEVELS	1
FEATURES	n/a

SUPPLIER
Virgin Games
338a Ladbrooke Grove
London
W10 5AH
(081) 9602255

GRAPHICS	87
▲ Colourful and beautifully crafted backdrops.	
▲ Huge range of killer sprites.	
SOUND	88
▲ Dance your rocks off, Chuck.	
▲ Unga bunga, he even talks!	
GAMEPLAY	86
▲ Combination of platform and puzzler.	
▲ Inspiring collision detection.	
CHALLENGE	87
▲ Gets harder as you play!	
▲ Each level reveals new (and nastier!) obstacles.	
A fine game. Chuck's definitely king of the rock-pile!	
PROSCORE	87

Fantasy RPGs are becoming somewhat popular on the Game Gear nowadays. What with *Ax-Battler* (reviewed last month), the soon-to-be-released *Phantasy Star*, and, right now, *Crystal Warriors*!

Storylines are becoming ever-similar. Prince/Princess Pinkenfluffy looked after the lovely magic sword/jewel/doo-brie in Castle Good and everyone was sooo happy!

Then, one fateful day, along came the evil Lord/Demon/all-round Mr Nasty, and things were never the same again! He stole the precious Flopsy Bunny of Milkalot, and vowed to rule the world with its not-quite-so-happy-now mystical power.

You take the role of Prince/Princess Cheerful, and must find Mr Cloudy-Day, give him a good telling-off, smack his wrist, and replace the magical Fluffikins in its rightful position at the end of the bed!



Crystal Warriors is a standard RPG in that you control a party of people in their particular chosen quest. Each team member has his/her own particular attributes, such as magic, strength and wealth, and all are vital to the mission. This particular mission is to protect the last of the four magic crystals from the evil clutches of the eldritch Grym. Luckily, Princess Iris has taken it on a journey, and Grym, realising this, has arisen from the depths to seek her and her precious cargo!

There are two distinct game types in *Crystal Warriors*. The first displays a flat, map-like landscape over which your party must travel. When a conflict is imminent, the screen toggles to the battle scenario. You face your adversary across the screen, and use your weapon/magic against him, as he does to you. Points are scored with a dice-throwing method, and health is depreciated in a relative ratio.

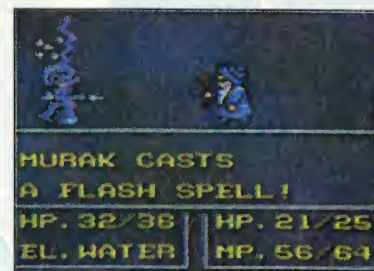
The game revolves around these two screens, with you travelling from town to town, buying new weapons, hiring and firing, all the while searching for the evil Grym and his henchmen!



Visit the inn for a bit of B&B, or perhaps a spot of R&R, even! Listen to everyone you meet, they all want to aid your quest!

PRO TIP Use friendly monsters to fight your battles for you, thus saving your warrior's hit-points.

The tiny sprites are barely visible (luckily I used the Magnigear enhancer), but are enlarged for battle scenes, and an even bigger image appears when a particular character is highlighted. Nevertheless, care has obviously been taken over both the sprites and their surroundings, as



Here's where you prove your fighting/magical ability. Or, alternatively, where you meet a sudden, painful death!

graphical content is not lacking in this game, with detail to be found everywhere.

Musically, it's the same old scene. The tune emanating from the speaker is nothing to write home about; it's a fairly jolly quest-type track. Some of the sound effects are cool, though. The noise a spell makes as it is cast is decent, as is the clash of swords.

Crystal Warriors is a fairly engrossing game. As soon as the cart was in the slot I was hooked for a good few hours, totally ignoring the outside world. It also has a save game option, through a battery back-up system, so you can come back to it when your eyes have recovered from the previous assault. Gameplay gets progressively difficult, with more and tougher warriors to defeat. RPGs aren't everyone's cup of tea,

but they make a decent change from the "Mr Mindless Slaughter meets the not-so-helpless Aliens" type of game, and because of this I would certainly recommend *Crystal Warriors* as a thought-provoking and challenging deviation from the norm.

● James "Arrpeegee" Scullion

Crystal Warriors



PROFILE

CRYSTAL WARRIORS ● SEGA ● £25 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE	2Mbit	SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	2	Console Concepts
STAGES	10+	The Village
SKILL LEVELS	1	Newcastle-under-Lyme
FEATURES	battery, versus	Staffordshire
		ST5 1QB
		©(0782) 712759

GRAPHICS	77
▲ Nice, bright, clear colours.	
▼ A little on the small side at times.	
SOUND	70
▲ Some FX are a bit of a giggle.	
▼ Bog standard portable in-game tune.	
GAMEPLAY	79
▲ Engrossing search-around fun.	
▲ You'll shed tears as a friend dies!	
CHALLENGE	82
▲ Gets tougher as you progress.	
▲ Difficulty levels are well thought-out.	
Pips <i>Ax-Battler</i> to the post as the GG RPG explosion continues!	
PROSCORE	79



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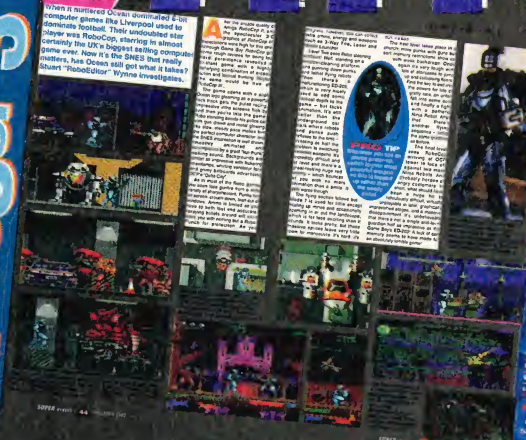
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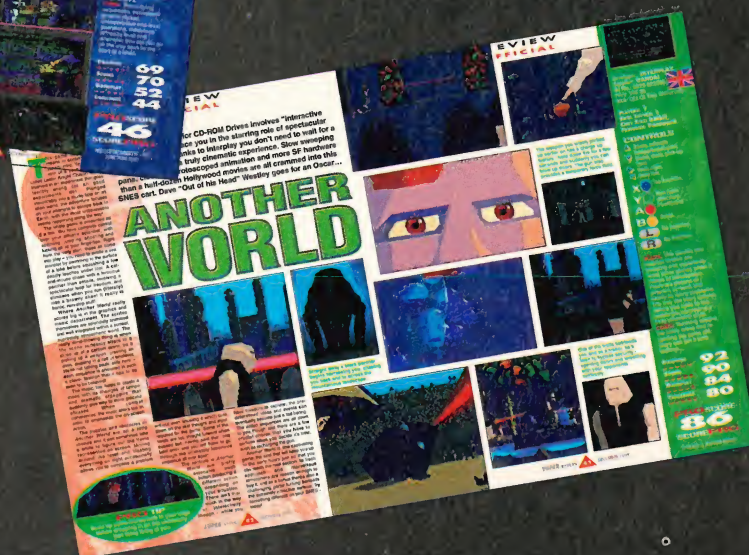
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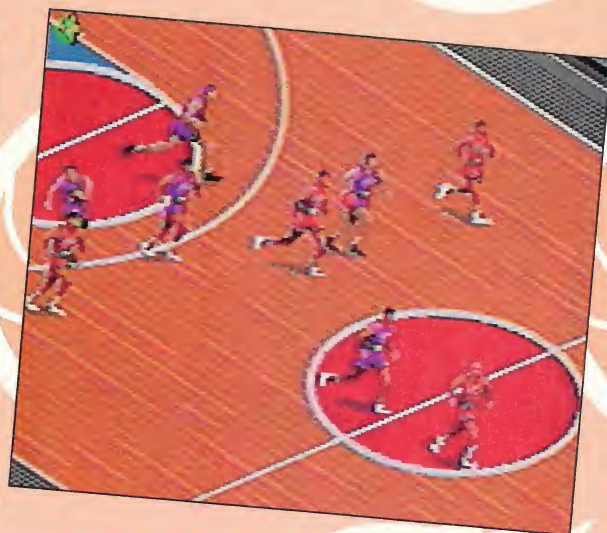
The first issue of SuperPro is on sale from the 12th of November at all good newsagents. The launch issue (priced £1.95) features a complete A to Z of Super NES games, a fabulous tips booklet and more exclusive previews than you dare imagine. Don't miss the great spectacular. Reserve your copy at your local newsagent now. In case you have difficulty finding SuperPro – it's guaranteed to fly off the shelves fast – phone Paragon Publishing Ltd on 0202 299900.



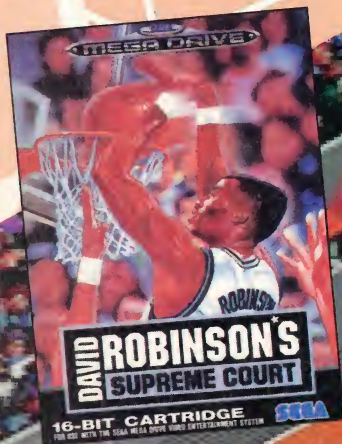


Many of us in the UK may never have heard of David "The Admiral" Robinson, despite the fact that he's one of the top centres in basketball today. His fast breaks and tomahawk slams, spin dunks, hoop-hangers and many more incredible moves continue to dazzle sports fans all across the States.

Here he takes a backseat role as ace commentator till you reach the final, and then the fun really begins. If you do manage to battle your way to the final, you'll meet "The Admiral" himself across the court. So get ready to block, steal and intercept like the pros, as you take him on in the full-tilt Supreme Court Allstar Challenge!



DAVID ROBINSON'S SUPREME COURT



Sega are quite happily pushing this one into your local shop, but for a few quid less you can get the American version via mail order from slamdunkin' Steve at Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759.

PRO TIP



If you're a real glory boy, then choose either Bond or Allnite for your team. These guys are three-point kings, and rarely miss outside the key!



From the "interesting" intro static of the man himself, tunelessly accompanied by what seems to be Paul Hardcastle's N-N-N-Nineteen, you're thrown in at the deep end of a huge options screen!

There are two main types of play: exhibition and tournament. The exhibition mode is simply one match just for the hell of it, similar in idea to a friendly soccer match. You can compete against the computer or another human player, or even watch the computer play himself. But the most innovative idea in a basketball game is yet to be revealed! You can take the place of a single player in an Allstars match, and play with and against the top US basketball supremos with the aid of the Roleplay mode. You can also choose the more conventional control method of the nearest player to the ball.

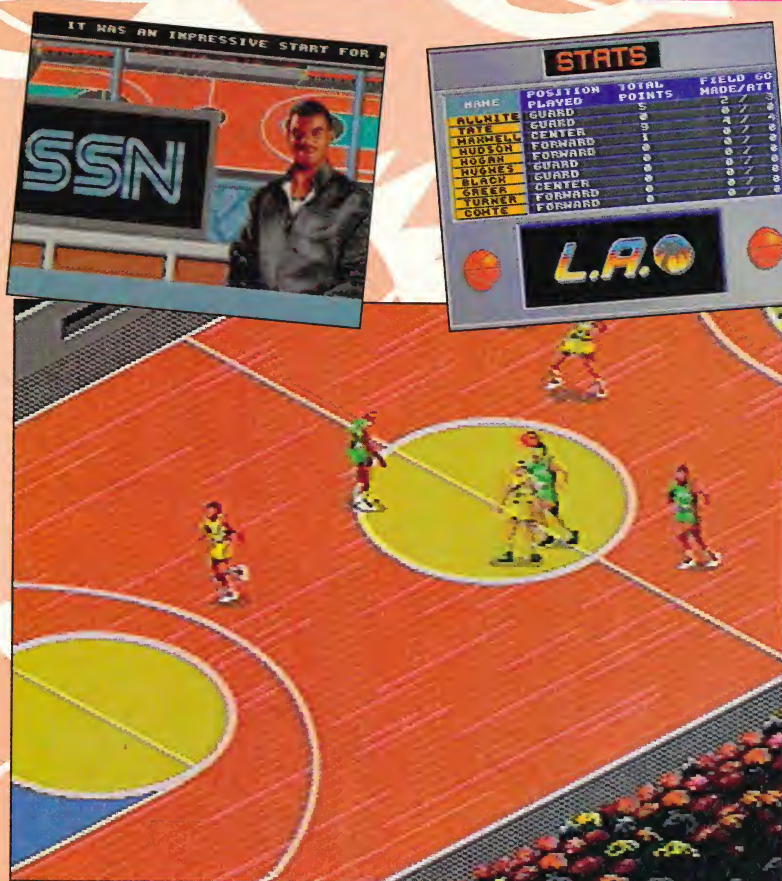
The tournament mode (one player only, unfortunately) gives you the opportunity of competing in a series of games against three computer teams. Win the tournament and you go on to the Allstar Challenge!

The four teams you may choose from all have a proven track record, it's just a pity there aren't more. They are Chicago, Detroit, New York and Los Angeles, although these aren't the actual Bulls, Pistons, Knicks and Lakers teams. All have speciality players, and differing styles of play.

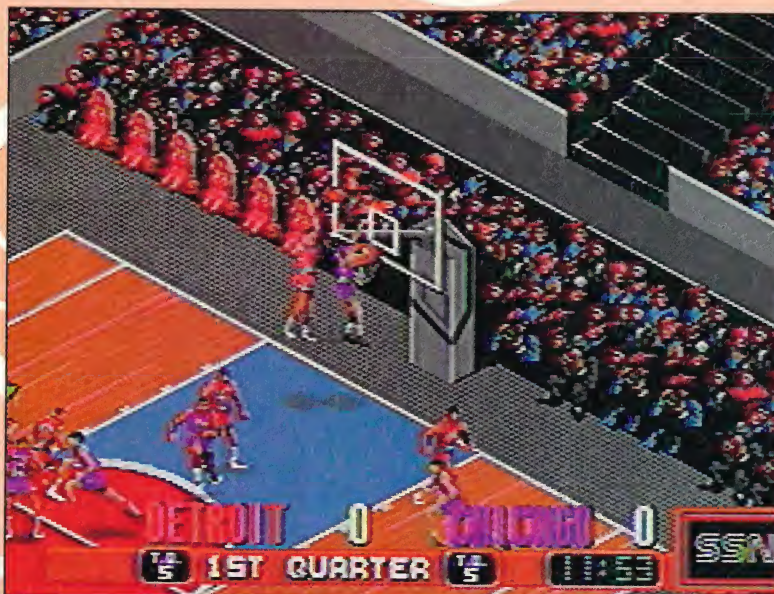
The court is realistically designed (especially the intricately drawn basket and backboard), with all the correct colourings and markings, and is approximately three screens wide. It's surrounded by a highly detailed audience who cheer, boo and stomp their feet with fantastic realism.



The players' animation is excellent. The variety of moves the brightly-clad sportsmen perform is astonishing, and includes a superb dribbling action, slam dunks, one-handers and over 20 other offensive and defensive moves. The screen scrolling is as fast as the game requires, but till



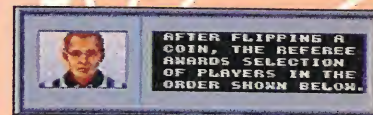
As you cross the halfway line, watch out you don't commit a back court violation by running back into your own half with the ball. The flick screen flip of Dave Robinson's will cause you to commit this loads of times at the start, but it soon becomes second nature.



Major action under the basket as Detroit pile on the pressure on the first attack of the game. While about 80% of field goals go in, you're always guaranteed of two points if you drive toward the basket and pop up for one of the many types of beautifully animated slam dunk shots.

you get used to the screen flipping over as you pass the halfway mark, it may seem a bit strange.

The in-game sound is unbelievable for a sports game. The Mega Drive's sound chip has really been stretched to encompass all of the noises heard at a basketball meet. The ball bounces, the crowd cheer and stomp their feet in time, the ref (sadly invisible) whistles, and (my personal favourite) the players' trainers squeak on the boards with alarming realism. A suitably-sporty tune plays throughout the match, but can be turned off if you find it distracting, as can the sound effects (although you'd be mad to turn them off!).



Supreme Court is an extremely playable game once past the obstacle of the flick-screen scrolling method. Passing is relatively easy to perform, although a bit hit-and-miss as to who it's to be passed to. Shooting is also fairly easy, some players are excellent three-pointers, others more suited to trick shots, including reverse dunks, one-handers and 360s.

Basketball is no slow game, as it's up and down the court non-stop. *Supreme Court* is as fast (if not faster!) than the real thing, the pace continuous throughout. Players can fatigue though, so careful selection is of paramount importance.

This is without doubt the number one basketball game on any format so far, beating all-comers. If *Jordan vs Bird* is a free throw point, then *Supreme Court* is easily a three-pointer or two!

● James "Allnite" Scullion

PROFILE

DAVID ROBINSON'S ● SEGA ● £39.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	Sega UK
PLAYERS	2		16 Portland Road
STAGES	4		London
SKILL LEVELS	3		W11 4LA
FEATURES	versus		☎(071) 7278070

GRAPHICS

▲ Unbelievably realistic character animation.

▲ Great court design and crowd involvement.

89

SOUND

▲ The average age of the combat soldier was...

▲ Wicked on-court sound effects!

90

GAMEPLAY

▲ Once mastered you'll perform miracle shots.

▲ Real tense atmosphere against human players.

89

CHALLENGE

▲ The Admiral's team are tough, tough, tough.

▼ One great player can make the game easy.

84

To date, no basketball sim comes close on any format. Class!

PROSCORE 87

EA certainly don't miss a trick and producing a game that is loosely based on the Gulf war has to be their most risqué project yet. A mad dictator (sound familiar?), General Killbaba, has come to power in a notorious Arab state. He is using his military might to threaten the West with countless terrorist activities. After using many unsavoury acts, such as melting prisoners in vats of acid, it's no wonder he's top of the allies hit lists.

Enter a smooth-shaven, top gun pilot with Ray-Bans in the latest Ah-64A Apache gunship. A large variety of missions await you as the heroic pilot, spread over five main areas of discontent. Two types of missiles and the devastating 30mm chain gun are on offer to slice and dice the enemy, and by crikey you will need them as you rescue, destroy and infiltrate.

Go to it soldier and blow the dictator a Hellfire kiss from us.

Desert Strike is essentially a full scale war with all the sights, sounds and gruesome trimmings crammed into an 8Mbit cart. The graphics are outstanding, with intricate detail on all the landscape features and some amazingly realistic hostile hardware that fully captures the spirit of the campaign.

I was instantly hooked by the sheer variety of missions, some uncomfortably close to recent events in the Gulf. Tasks as diverse as rescuing hostages from a luxury yacht, destroying chemical weapons and even ferrying a school bus to safety, make *Desert Strike* unpredictable and immensely compelling.

The control method is simple to grasp and the response time is perfect, enabling tricky manoeuvres to be completed with relative ease. I cannot fault the options all decked out in Mash style lettering. There is a useful password option and the inclusion of co-pilots with different personalities and strengths enhances the close call combat situations.

As soon as I grasped the control stick, I immediately preferred the fixed altitude style of play, not having to worry about torque or crashing into the drink makes your aerial antics all the more enjoyable.

Mike Posehn, the programmer, has certainly made this game frighteningly real and I'm all for it. From the MIAs using mirrors to attract you to

the many secret bunkers that litter the battlefields, every aspect of *Desert Strike* is totally authentic, luring me back again and again.

No helicopter combat sim can do without the thumping of the rotor blades, the chain gun rapping into concrete and the tense metallic whistle of an incoming missile. *Desert Strike* is best played with the volume full up so that cutting up an APC becomes an obscene orgy of noise punctuated by that final, satisfying explosion.

There is a convincing military atmosphere aided by the regimental drum marches and the briefing room not forgetting the verbal roasting you get if you fail. It all prepares you for

the glorious battle ahead

but judging by some of the complex missions, it is not an easy war to win.

If I had to criticize *Desert Strike* in any way (which is difficult), I would have to say that occasionally the screen jerks slightly when turning and you sometimes get swallowed by the edge of the picture. Although quickly rectified, this can cause you to be destroyed by enemy fire and with so few lives it is very frustrating.

Certainly, if you like your shoot-'em-ups thick and fast, then the multitude of desert opponents will satisfy you. Personally, I enjoy diving through a residential area guns blazing towards an unsuspecting tank, then turning down another street and lifting a hostage from a roof under heavy fire. *Desert Strike* lets you fulfil your wishes and more besides.

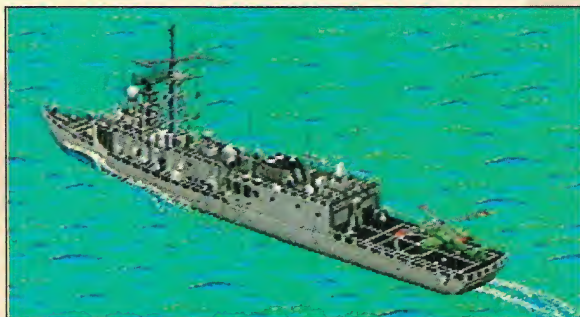
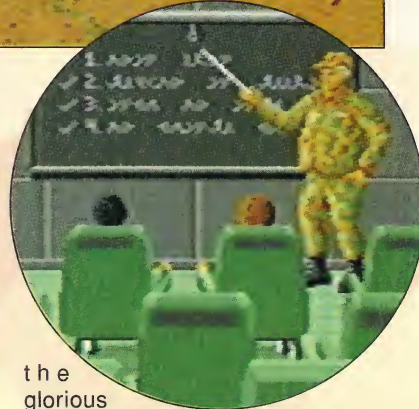
PRO TIP Do not approach the POW camp on level two before you have completed every other mission. If you do, you will encounter impossible odds with unavoidable streams of bullets and more tanks than you can possibly handle. Only when all the SKUD launchers and prisons have been destroyed is it safe.



A dawn launch from the allied frigate (above) and a quick sortie into a city to rescue some trapped news reporters (Electronic Arts News Network). *Desert Strike* is so addictive because there is so much to do.



DESERT



STRIKE



The campaign heats up on level four as the evil dictator attempts to flee leaving vast environmental damage. You must dive in and take out the tanks and stop that oil flow. Meanwhile (left), a hostage is melted.

PRO TIP Just in case you get bogged down, here is the code to level two: TGJZLOK. Now you can get well into the Prison level and experience even more *Desert Strike* violence.



Collect fuel drums and tool boxes to stay in the air.

Weapons readouts: hellfires are the most powerful missile.

This mission three map indicates large urban concentration in the centre.

The message bar relates to what is highlighted on the map screen.



Indicates how many MIAs, POWs or spies you have captured.

The map (above) identifies targets, supplies and MIAs.

A short description and picture of a specific target.

Mission status: what percentage of the missions are complete.

What's so addictive is that even if you complete it, you can still come back and relieve a bit of tension any time.

In short, for gung-ho trigger happy heroes like me *Desert Strike* is THE combat shoot-'em-up. See you at the medal ceremony.

● Damian "chopper" Butt

Yeah! This is what I joined up for. Sinking loads of hellfires into some vulnerable buildings and strafing the troops with thousands of bullets. The garbage trucks hold either hostages or bomb parts.

PROFILE

DESERT STRIKE ● EA ● £39.99 ● OUT APRIL

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 5
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES password

SUPPLIER
Electronic Arts
Langeley Business Centre
11-49 Station Road
Langeley, Nr Slough
Berkshire SL3 8YN
T (0753) 549442



GRAPHICS	92
▲ Detailed and convincing battleground.	
▲ What an awesome frigate!	
SOUND	89
▲ Terrific military marches and anthems.	
▲ Ear drum-bursting explosions.	
GAMEPLAY	94
▲ Vast destruction is appealing.	
▲ Varied missions require quick thinking.	
CHALLENGE	88
▲ A pilot's work is never done.	
▲ Sierra hotel is frequently visited.	
EA have done it again with a masterpiece of intense action.	
PROSCORE	92

Ever wanted a subtle blend of pinball action with a touch of extreme occult violence? If this is the sort of thing that tingles your taste buds then *Devil Crash* is the game for you. Forget all those wimpy games where you have to hit a little ball against a few buffers for 2,000 points, this game allows you to slaughter the hooded monks and demon creatures for 700,000.

The game first appeared on the PC Engine as a sequel to *Alien Crush*. Now the two forces of good and evil must battle it out one last time for total supremacy. Only one can win, and it is up to you to make sure good triumphs over evil. So enter the castle of the Devil and kick him back to where he came from (ie, the PC Engine).

PRO TIP There is a hidden options screen offering lots of stuff. If you press A, B, C and START on the title screen you'll be transported to it.



As soon as the title screen crackles and fades into view you know that *Devil Crash* is no ordinary game. It may have something to do with the booming music, or maybe it's the way that the blood-shot eye looks around dragging all the entrails with it. If you're gonna play this, prepare to get bloody.

The main pin table is about three screens long with some super smooth scrolling joining them. This



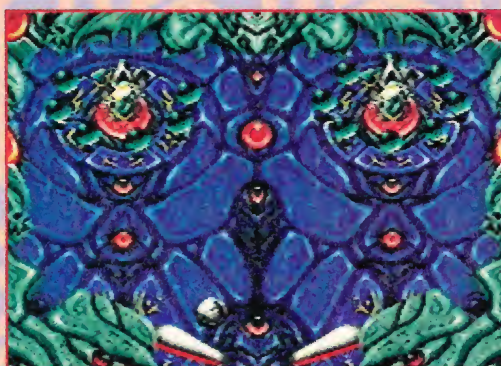
table depicts the inside of a gloomy Gothic castle with the dark lord's minions roaming about. Attention to detail on the table is superb. As the ball flies up and down the screen at ridiculously fast speeds, the eyes of most of the monsters will follow you around the screen.

Animation on all the sprites is brilliant and actually makes you feel like you are wiping them out in the most painful fashion as they explode when the ball hits them. At no time does the game slow down, regardless of how many explosions and sprites are on screen. There are literally dozens of bonuses that can be had by wiping out certain groups of creatures or by hitting the ball into certain places.

When a creature is lit by an arrow you can hit the ball to them to enter one of the six special bonus stages. Here mega points are to be had if you can complete the stage, but the odds are stacked against you. The graphics on these special stages are breathtaking, especially stage six



Stage 5 - You must destroy all the fire demons over the holes to light them up. When they are all lit and the door at the very top of the screen has been opened, you are in for a big score. Without doubt this is the hardest and most frustrating of all bonus stages. Even after playing *Devil Crash* for a long while it's impossible to master.



You'll get to a random bonus stage when going through this exit. Here you see stage 3. Destroy the globes and the wizards can then be hit. Smashing into the wizards five times will destroy them. Easy because the ball often gets trapped inside the globes.



Exiting here - which is possible only after destroying the blue eggs underneath - takes you to stage 1. Five dragons spit fireballs at you. Get the ball to roll around the edge of the screen to create a mass wipe out.



DEVIL

SEGA pro YO!

AVAILABLE IN

JAPAN

pro REVIEW



In the top section it's possible to get into any of the bonus stages. Simply direct the ball into the relevant illuminated exit after destroying the skulls on the ceiling. Above is stage 6. Hit the monster's head ten times, then do it again when it swirls around the screen. Hit the main head to finish the stage.



This exit is opened at the start of the game and will take you randomly to one of the bonus stages. Here you can see stage 4. The three menacing skulls are protected by the balls of demon plasma. Hit the skulls eight times to kill them. Relatively easy if you remember to miss the demon plasma.



While putting the ball through this exit blocks the escape route at the bottom of the screen (which is hugely useful in itself), it also takes you to batty stage 2. However, you've got to get the ball through the exit section five times in a row – tricky, to say the least. Still, bonus screen 2 – if and when you manage to get to it – boasts the best music; it's fast and furious. The idea is to hit any of the three coffins a number of times. Bats will swarm out and generally be a nuisance – forget them. Instead, hit the coffins five times each to wipe them out.

can't be touched for addictiveness. The password system that is used means you can come back to the same point in the game time after time, with all the balls etc kept preserved exactly. Very useful!

Incidentally, if you're about to lose a ball PAUSE the game and press A to get a password. Reset the machine and you will find the same password is now the the default password. Press START and you will start where you left off, with your ball back in the firer.

Devil Crash is without doubt the



PROFILE

DEVIL CRASH ● TECHNOSOFT ● £34 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 6
SKILL LEVELS 2
FEATURES password

SUPPLIER

KC's
Computer Emporium
3 High Street
Loughborough
Leicestershire
(0509) 217492

which has to be seen to be believed.

Sound effects aren't half-baked synth notes either. An ominous, tolling tune greets you on the title screen and then the real thumping music plays throughout with a separate tune for each of the special stages. The sound effects include the incredible laughter when you lose a ball to the huge explosions when you seriously wipe out the demons.

As for playability, well *Devil Crash*

PROTALK The graphics are excellent; especially the bonus screens. There's more to this game than good looks and sound though – it's hugely addictive and keeps you coming back for more.

Name... RICHARD "ETCH" UREN
From TROWBRIDGE
Age 15
Fav game ARCUS
ODDYSEE
Machine owned MEGA DRIVE



number one pinball game on the Mega Drive; *Dinoland* is nice but doesn't come close. Great use of graphics and sound combine with well thought out gameplay to make it a fantastic play.

● Les "Tilt" Ellis

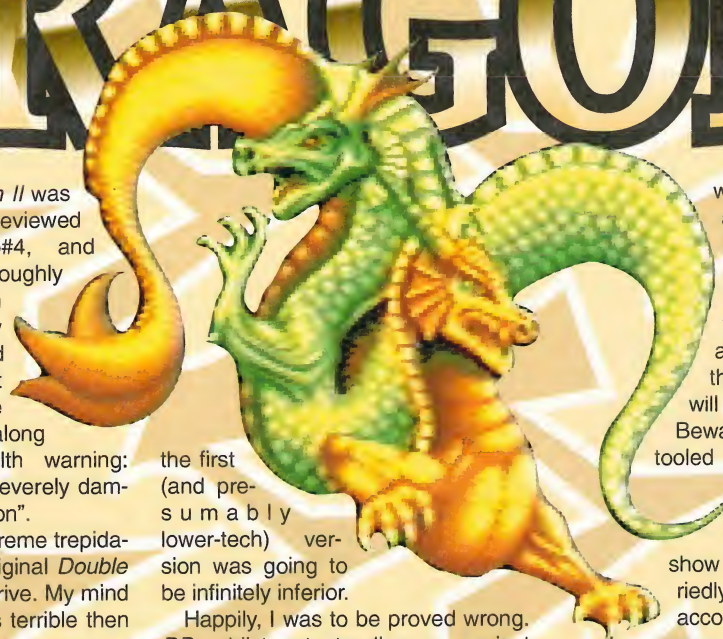
GRAPHICS	92
▲ Amazingly large and detailed playing area.	
▲ Loads of horrific creatures to explode.	
SOUND	89
▲ Eight different and vibrant tunes.	
▲ Loads of huge and original sound effects.	
GAMEPLAY	90
▲ Simple in concept but fiendishly addictive.	
▲ Amazingly fast at times.	
CHALLENGE	91
▲ Very tough to finish ALL the bonuses.	
▲ The challenge never lets up.	

A need of more judgement than luck ensures *Devil Crash* will last for ages.

PROSCORE 92

CRASH

DOUBLE DRAGON



Once upon a time, all across the land, pubescent young men were feeding ten pence coins into one arcade machine with singular motivation.

Desperately seeking Susan was the order of the day, for the evil mob ruler, Don Aldduck, had kidnapped her and was itching to do extremely nasty things to her personage. Unless, that was, you could reach her in time!

Whether this was an original idea or not is still furiously debated now. The origin of the beat-'em-up is lost in the mists of antiquity so we'll never know. What is known is that it became a classic, worthy of respect.

Many beat-'em-ups have followed, but for most Double Dragon was and still is their fave basher. But with the sequel receiving terrible reviews a couple of months back, Double Dragon has appeared quietly on the Mega Drive, hoping not to ruin anyone's expectations.

Double Dragon II was previously reviewed in SEGA PRO #4, and was thoroughly panned. With appalling sound, slow and jerky graphics, and frustrating gameplay, it received a miserable ProScore of only 29%, along with a SEGA PRO health warning: "Buying this game will severely damage your games collection".

And so it was with extreme trepidation that I slotted the original *Double Dragon* into my Mega Drive. My mind raced, if the sequel was terrible then

the first (and presumably lower-tech) version was going to be infinitely inferior.

Happily, I was to be proved wrong. *DD*, whilst not standing up against the plethora of excellent beat-'em-ups (such as *Streets of Rage* or *Two Crude Dudes*), is at least an adequate game, and at best, far preferable to *DD II*.

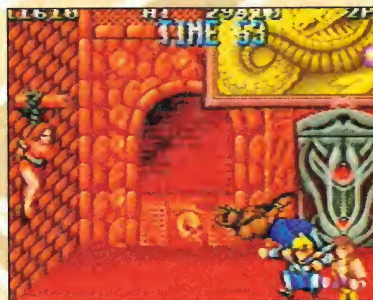
Power up and, after a couple of slick title pages, you have the choice of getting straight into the action or tweaking the options. These include lives, credits and button configuration (useful if you have a favourite joypad set-up).

The graphics are fairly good, the best thing about them being the intertwined dragons on the intro static, followed closely by the big, hairy gorilla dudes and the backdrops; cityscapes leading later to huge cliff-faces. Sprite animation is pleasing too, with your hero having a fair range of punches and kicks with which to battle his way along. He can also steal

weapons from his adversaries, the baseball bat being the most effective. Objects to throw at them (barrels, boxes and boulders) litter the game area, and will knock them for six!

Beware when they're tooled up themselves, as they'll floor you with obvious glee!

Seventies cop-show music pumps hurriedly from your speaker accompanied by grunts, groans and the sound of violent impacts, and is therefore respectable enough, but not terribly innovative.



Here we see the first stage of level two. Pretty simple really. Just stay away from the fore of the screen. (And the escalator is instant death too, so beware!)

PROFILE

DOUBLE DRAGON ● ACCOLADE ● £29.99 ● OUT APRIL

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 3
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER

Accolade Europe
Bowling House
Point Pleasure
Wandsworth
London SW18 1PE
(081) 8770880



Playability is a plus for this little game. It sports smooth two-way parallax and has none of the jerky slowness of its sequel. The only thing to watch for is your player falling off the front of the screen (a minor irritation at times). Two-player mode is, obviously, far more fun. If you tire of beating up the baddies, you can perfect your throwing techniques on your buddy, although he won't be too co-operative, to say the least!

DD is certainly an accurate translation of the coin-op, however, the game is very old and still too easy with its small play area and abundance of continues. Entry-level gamers, fans of the coin-op, and

people who just like finishing games may find some secret pleasure hidden deep within its history-laden walls. They'll have to dig deep though.

● James "Van Cleef" Scullion

DOUBLE DRAGON II

Producer: Pal Soft

Supplier: Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759.

ProReviewed: SEGAPro#4

ProScore: 29%

The Pro's said: "Would look more at home on a hand-held... Let's face it, Cliff Richard has heaps more credibility than anyone who buys this."



PRO TIP

Don't walk too close to the scenery's foreground as you'll be plummeting to your doom with alarming regularity!



Left: "Fancy a game of baseball?" These gorilla dudes do not mess around so don't go in empty-handed!

Above: There I was, having a nice stroll in the woods and minding my own business, when all of a sudden, these guys jumped out and stole my picnic!



Left: Amongst your amazingly violent repertoire, you have the ability to break a guy's neck with a single kick..

Below: "Hey pal, how much does that barrel weigh?" This chap is about to find out in an extremely unpleasant manner!



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Good detail on all the characters.
- ▼ Poor variety to the sprites

70

SOUND

- ▲ Sonics blend well with the action.
- ▲ Interesting theme tune

73

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Big guys will give you a good "Tango". (Ouch!)
- ▲ Try pulling the baddies' hair.

75

CHALLENGE

- ▼ Far too easy to demolish opponents.
- ▼ Levels just aren't long enough

52

Easier than most which ruins any two-player longevity.

PROSCORE

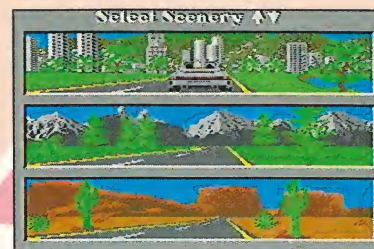
72

It's a well-known fact that Trowbridge, the home of the SegaPros, is the boy-racer capital of England. The police in our grubby town even stopped poor old Damian the other night, confusing his car with the other Escorts of the Kevins and Dougs of the streets. With Trowbridge having such an "active" night-life, every member of the SegaPro team must try to weave through the grand prix circuit to their homes in the evening. In fact, getting to the office in the morning is just practise for games like *Super Monaco GP*, *Hard Drivin'* and *Turbo Out Run*.

The latest racer to join the clan is *The Duel: Test Drive 2*. The originally debuted on the Amiga to great acclaim in 1989. So buckle up and grab a ticket to ride...



This is what you get for playing the Dukes of Hazard and chasing parked cars. This is the gas station, make sure you pull in nice and close to the building otherwise the gas won't reach. On your first few games you'll probably shoot straight past it so get ready to slam on those brakes - this picture demonstrates the other way of stopping.



Choose your racing scenery: will you be a city slicker (or boy racer as they're known around here), a country bumpkin or a full blown beach bum?



The Duel

TEST DRIVE II



The screech of tyres and the roar of an engine announces the arrival of *The Duel: Test Drive 2*. This game is unlike any other you may have played on the Mega Drive. The only thing that comes close is *Hard Drivin'*.

The title screen is your typical highly polished Ballistic presentation; someone has really put some effort into this. The options screen allows you to select your skill level, which is defined by various levels of progres-

sion from automatic transmission to manual. Accelerate, brake, change gear, etc can then be assigned to specific buttons, and finally you can choose from three adrenalin-pumping tunes to accompany your drive.

You then get the fun part, the chance to choose which of the luxury sports cars you wish to drive. Each is beautifully pictured, with their performance statistics alongside. After choosing your opponent's car from the same Porsche, Lamborghini or Ferrari, you can opt for one of the





Doesn't that always happen. Pull out to overtake this crummy blue thing when an on-coming BMW makes you think twice. Maybe there's enough room to squeeze between but it will take a lot of skill, a little luck and a new pair of underpants.

PROFILE	THE DUEL: TD2 ● BALLISTIC ● £34.99 ● OUT JUNE			
	CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER	
	PLAYERS	1	Accolade Europe	
	STAGES	3	Bowling House	
	SKILL LEVELS	4	Point Pleasure	
	FEATURES	n/a	Wandsworth London SW18 1PE (081) 8770880	

three race areas in California and then, after all that, it's onto the racing.

The graphics in *The Duel* manage to combine both speed and finesse – unusual for a driving game, but *The Duel* seems to pull it off with ease. The cockpit takes up just over half the screen and contains everything you need (speedo, rev counter, etc) plus a few decorative extras. The movement of the gearstick is an especially nice touch as it slides gently between the gears. Up at the top of the

screen, by your rear view mirror, is a radar detector – standard issue for American racers. This is definitely not for dec-

PRO TIP After extensive play, we found the Porsche to be the best car to start in. It may not have the looks, but it's got it where it counts, under the hood. While the top speed is not as good as the Lambo or Ferrari, the acceleration is exemplary, and if you ever crash that's what counts.



FERRARI F40		TA Select
Approx. Price.....\$269,000		
Mid-engine/rear dr./5 sp man		
2936cc twin turbo dohc 32v U-8		
Comp. ratio.....7.8:1	Bhp @ rpm.....478 @ 7000	
Torque @ rpm.....425 @ 4000	1/4 mile.....12.0s @ 124 mph	
Top Speed.....201 mph	Brak. fr 80mph.....250 ft	
Lat. Accel.....0.87g		

PORSCHE 911		TA Select
Approx. Price.....\$239,000		
Rear engine/4-WD/6 sp man		
2849cc twin turbo dohc 24v flat 6		
Comp. ratio.....8.3:1	Bhp @ rpm.....444 @ 6500	
Torque @ rpm.....369 @ 5500	1/4 mile.....12.0s @ 116 mph	
Top Speed.....197 mph	Brak. fr 80mph.....245 ft	
Lat. Accel.....0.87g		

LAMBORGHINI DIABLO		TA Select
Approx. Price.....\$239,000		
Mid-engine/rear dr./5 sp man		
5707cc 48v dohc U-12		
Comp. ratio.....10.0:1	Bhp @ rpm.....492 @ 6800	
Torque @ rpm.....428 @ 5200	1/4 mile.....13.3s @ 114 mph	
Top Speed.....est. 202 mph	Brak. fr 80mph.....247 ft	
Lat. Accel.....0.91g		

Statisticians watch out. It's the old speed against acceleration argument, the Ferrari may be fast but it takes so long to get to that speed that the Porsche runs all over it.



oration and informs you when you are about to enter speed traps set up by the over zealous smokies that line the highways.

Your view of the track is just like you were driving the car – and, remember, it's in America so the car's left-hand drive. The first thing you see is your opponent's car taking up your rear-view mirror. Beating him isn't just a case of going faster than him, you must block him and capitalise from his mistakes (although watch out when he crashes that you don't go straight into the back of him!).

The scenery isn't overly complex,

but it has its fair share of obstacles like trees, tunnels, bridges, cliffs, etc. You don't get much time to admire the scenery though, because zooming down the road at 200kph and coming across an unexpected corner is usually not beneficial to your car's bodywork.

Just keeping your car on the track is difficult enough, but when you start to encounter other road users, things can get very hairy. The other vehicles are detailed enough to be recognisable, ranging from kids in transit vans to yuppies in BMWs. Overtaking these cars is just like real-life. You can't just pull out and zoom past them. Quite often you'll swing the car out to find a BMW boy-racing towards you, so you'll either have to duck in and

Watch out behind you in the rear view mirror.

wait or move out onto the grass to avoid it. It's not just a case of squeezing between them because the road is constantly changing from two up to four lanes.

Above all, you actually feel like you're in the car, zooming along the country lanes, hillside cliffs or beach boulevards. As I sped into corners, I actually felt myself swaying from one side to the other unlike any other driving game – even *Hard Drivin'*.

The three pieces of driving music in *The Duel* would grace any car CD player. Each suits a certain style of driving: Cruisin' for posers, Open Road for a country jaunt with little traffic and Dream Drive for speed freaks. All the time, the constant roar of your engine reminds you of your speed. Occasionally the radar beeps, and if you have a meeting with a tree the crunch is quite realistic. Lastly, the dastardly cops have a scary siren that rings through the country air with frightening realism.

The Duel is not easy to complete by any standards, but it does have an encouraging learning curve. Familiarising yourself with the handling characteristics of each car is fun and enhances the realism. The only other road-based racing game like this is *Hard Drivin'*, and while that does play extremely well, it lacks many of the visuals and variation that *The Duel* possesses. Above all, this game is packed with loads to do. The courses are long, there are more than your fair share of hazards and three super sports cars to choose from.

After giving all the pop-

YOU DRIVE ME CRAZY



● At £197,502, the Ferrari F-40 is the world's most desirable car to own. With a top speed of over 200mph, you can even burn up an XR3i!



● Sadly Damian's 959 was in the garage at time of going to press, so pictured above is a Porsche 911 we found in Trowbridge.

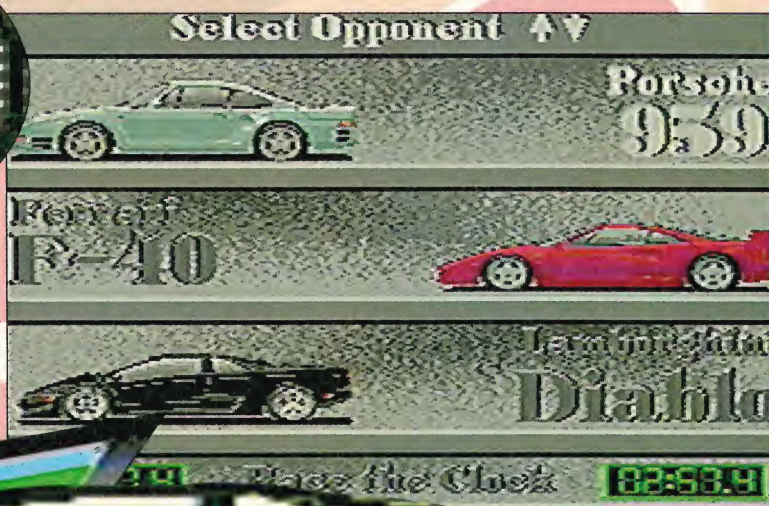


● With a top speed of 205mph, 0-60 of around four seconds and a price tag of only £155,933, this is the bargain of the three.



ular racing games another airing while reviewing *The Duel*, I have no hesitation in recommending this to anyone. It is quite simply the most comprehensive racing game on the market to date.

● Les "Micro" Ellis



GRAPHICS	91
▲ Brilliant intro screens; bright and colourful.	
▲ Excellent combination of detail and speed.	
SOUND	85
▲ Three original, heart-pounding tracks.	
▲ A handful of realistic effects.	
GAMEPLAY	93
▲ Feels just like the real thing.	
▲ Vast array of realistic obstacles.	
CHALLENGE	90
▲ Progressively difficult, long winding tracks.	
▲ Traffic flow constantly changing.	
The right game at the right price, don't miss <i>The Duel</i> .	
PROSCORE	90

Double Dragon II is possibly the best and most famous arcade beat-'em-up of all-time. There was no way its programmers, Pal Soft, could go wrong with this game, was there?

The sad tale is of two brothers, Billy and Jimmy, who must avenge the death of one of their girlfriends, Marian. Sounds like one of those naff martial arts movies with that dubbing that is about as far out as Pluto. But even the likes of Van Damme must know that the chances of two men against the whole deviant population of New York is not very high. Yet they try and try.

With beat-'em-ups on the Mega Drive reaching fever pitch this month, Double Dragon II will have to be something very special to impress.



Where do you start with a game as eagerly awaited as Double Dragon II. Let's take a look at the good points:

DOUBLE DRAGON

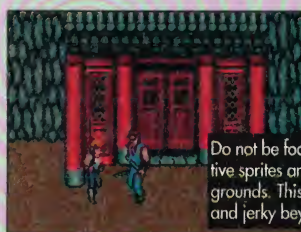
the title screen is okay. Now on with the rest of the review.

The graphics in DDII are pathetically childish. I don't kid you when I say that I had to check that this was a Mega Drive cart and not a Master System cart running through the PowerBase converter. But then I thought that the graphics were too bad to

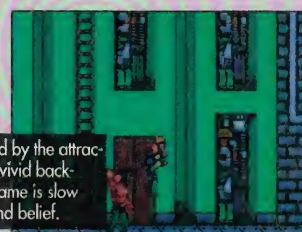
The Revenge

PROFILE	DOUBLE DRAG II ● PAL SOFT ● £40 ● IMPORT		
	CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER
	PLAYERS	2	Console Concepts
	STAGES	4	The Village
	SKILL LEVELS	3	Newcastle-under-Lyme
	FEATURES	teamplay	Staffordshire ST5 1QB
			©(0782) 712759

be a Master System game. Perhaps some sly trickster had sneakily linked up a Nintendo to the screen as a cruel joke – but not even that was true. Sure enough, this was the Mega Drive cart I had feared all along.



Do not be fooled by the attractive sprites and vivid back-grounds. This game is slow and jerky beyond belief.



PRO TIP Double team on the big bad guys. Each player stand either side of him and repeatedly punch and kick. He won't stand a chance against you both.



But maybe the cart was packed with music instead, I thought. Sadly not. An appalling tune grates through the whole of the game, and its only function is to cover up the cheap sound effects that lurk beneath it.

If all else fails, usually the gameplay can rescue a game from being plunged into the depths of the bin after its first go, but even that was bordering on the worst ever. This is mainly due to the slowness of the graphics



GRAPHICS ▼ Would look more at home on a hand-held. ▼ I've seen better graphics on toilet walls.	32
SOUND ▼ Naff crunching effects. ▼ Stock, Aitken and Waterman are back!	35
GAMEPLAY ▼ Far too slow to play. ▼ Totally inaccurate when picking up weapons.	29
CHALLENGE ▼ Far too easy to finish. ▼ Even on the hard level.	22
This is one dragon that you won't want to chase.	
PROSCORE 29	

The graphics don't just look simple, they are also terribly animated with a few frames of animation that runs at a very slow pace, they also flicker, and the collision detection is non-existent. And if that wasn't bad enough, the scrolling is about as smooth as sandpaper. Even the back-grounds seem like something rejected from an 8-bit game.

which makes the game very unexciting and frustrating to play. Nothing ever happens where and when you want it. It isn't even challenging; I completed all four stages in one-player mode (on hard level!) on the first go.



Let's face it, Cliff Richard has heaps more credibility than anyone who buys this.

After a plethora of wannabes, the Mega Drive finally receives its first official Dungeons & Dragons title!

Duke Barrik knows that his men will soon fall prey to the advancing goblin hordes and that his castle and all he has built will be destroyed and forgotten. Then, just as the goblins prepare to attack, a bright flash envelops the castle... Duke Barrik and his men find themselves and their castle in the middle of a strange valley, surrounded by impossibly high cliffs and under the unrelenting glare of a bright, red sun.

In this new land, the Duke and his subjects will need to find allies to help them fight the many strange creatures of the valley. The Duke needs volunteers to explore the area, and you just got nominated...



Being the extremely shrewd Pros that we are, we refused to splash out the extortionate £60 Sega were asking, so we shopped around. Our American review copy of *Warriors of the Eternal Sun* came on horseback from AMS Electronic Games, Dept SNB (pro), 9 Hay Lane, Kingsbury, London NW9 9EL. Tel: (081) 4502166. Their meagre asking price is £44.95. Now that's more like it!

A gloriously animated intro tells you the story so far and leads you to the options screen. Here you can either re-load a previously saved game, or opt for either the Mega Drive's default team of explorers (for a quick start) or create your own merry band.



You select your team of four from social classes: cleric (fighting and spell casting), fighter, magic-user, thief (stealth and fighting), dwarf (fighting), elfling (spell-casting and fighting) and halfling (stealth and fighting). After naming your character, there's the standard RPG ability setting, done by rolling the graphic dice.

The first thing that strikes you is the graphics. Viewed from above, the characters are beautifully defined and animated while the eight-way scrolling backgrounds are detailed

MEGA
DRIVE



Within these four walls...

This is where your quest begins. Inside the confines of this fine old castle are many dungeons to be explored, characters to be thwarted or befriended and numerous shops in which to spend your hard earned booty.



Uh,oh, you're in trouble now. Here comes the Hairy Beastman and he doesn't look too friendly. Careful tactics are required when repelling unfriendly adversaries, although big expensive weapons do help.



PROFILE	DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ● SEGA US ● £59.99 ● OUT AUG			
	CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER Sega UK 16 Portland Road London W11 4LA ☎ (071) 7278070	
	PLAYERS	1		
	STAGES	1 (big)		
	SKILL LEVELS	1		
	FEATURES	battery save		



Dungeons & Dragons

WARRIORS OF THE ETERNAL SUN

and well rendered. In caverns and dungeons, the graphics change to first person 3-D, making the combat sequences a blast!

You begin in the castle where you can interact with locals and purchase a variety of weapons and armour, although your limited funds won't stretch to buying magic scrolls. All the items available in the early stages are fairly wimpy, but as the game progresses, better weapons, stronger armour and more powerful spells quickly become available... at a price.

A full menu and sub menu system

offer every conceivable option from game save to your all-important map. You can even turn off the mildly irritating tunes as you go along, thankfully. All your characters appear at the side of the screen, with a note of the weapons or spells they currently hold, and their hit point status.

Controlling the characters onscreen couldn't be easier. An arrow by the team portraits denotes which character leads the team and the rest trot along behind you. Joypad controls are simple, with directions moving people, getting rid of the necessity for much menu accessing.

Any RPG stands or falls on its ease of play for newcomers, and it must be said that *Warriors of the Eternal Sun* is extremely hard work to begin with and, to be honest, doesn't get much easier as you go on. It's not that it's set up any differently to other RPGs, but there's so little help in the early stages, and your characters have so few HPs (hit points), that any battle becomes risky. That, combined with the fact that it takes a long time before you make any real progress in the game, might dissuade a lot of people from buying it.

PRO TIP

When you attack enemy groups, use bows and slings in a hit and run technique until you build up

your HP. It'll take longer, but at least you'll stay alive!



This is the main view screen used when strolling around the dungeons under the castle. Items can be collect and manipulated whilst in this mode and puzzle-solving is every bit as important as fighting.



Oh dear, it seems that you and your party have shuffled off this mortal coil and the world is left at the mercy of the hands of evil. Unless you reboot of course!

Warriors of the Eternal Sun will certainly give D&D fans a real kick and roleplayers will love it, but the high difficulty factor is going to put a lot of people off. On the plus side, *Warriors* is a MASSIVE game with heaps of features and some great locations to explore. The graphics are excellent for an RPG, and the tunes and effects are fairly smart, too. The only other positive aspect for newcomers to RPGs is that it's incredibly addictive which, given the difficulty, might just stop you from flinging your Mega Drive out of the window in frustration!

● David "goblin" Graham

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Detailed sprites throughout.
- ▲ Backgrounds well drawn and full of detail.

83

SOUND

- ▲ Tunes change in different area.
- ▼ Not enough spot effects.

77

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Idiot-proof control method.
- ▲ Plenty to explore.

85

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Even super Pros will be struggling here.
- ▼ Very difficult to begin with.

90

This game is tough – mega tough! – so make sure you're up to it.

PROSCORE 84

GIVE US A CLUE

Warriors of the Eternal Sun is one very, very big and ultra tough game. Even SegaPros will find this one tricky, that's why Sega of America have put together a totally comprehensive hint book to help buyers of this colossal game. The 96-page book contains everything you could ever need: comprehensive maps on over 25 dungeons and caverns, background info on the characters and full details on the armour, magic spells and 100 monsters. In the States, it retails for \$12.95 (around £7), although Sega UK were unsure whether they would bring it into the UK. Check out your local retailer for more info.

New York has been enveloped in a mysterious, dark storm cloud, known throughout the city as El Viento. At present it's over the Chrysler buildings, crackling with magical energy.

The streets are populated by violent sociopaths armed with all the latest military weaponry, and no-one knows who is supplying them.

From another age, a young girl, Annette, rips through the time barrier and appears in the decaying city. Armed with her magical skills, her martial arts prowess and deadly razor boomerangs, Annette plunges into a personal war against the gangs. Her ultimate aim: to take revenge on whoever summoned her.

Each area of the city must be penetrated and the guardians defeated before Annette can move on. Even now she is scaling the perimeter walls clutching her instruments of death. It will only be a matter of time before she finds those responsible.

From the moment the eerie music seeps from your TV and the low toned static shots fade in and out, you know you're in for something special. Not only does this game have an incredibly atmospheric soundtrack

PROTIP On the first level, you can leap up onto several hanging catwalks. Keep on them till you get the strength potion, then drop down, use the magic on the bikes, and clear the first stage. Stay alert; some enemies carry power-ups when killed.

but it also contains some of the best intro screens and plot outlines I've ever seen. The New York skyline and demonic buildings resemble a bleak sci-fi movie, and this is only the beginning of the game.



Don't worry. All that's happening here is that you're falling down a massive pit full of boulders. Every time you touch one of the boulders, it will explode, leaving you extra energy.

The main sprite is detailed and lively with a host of lightning moves to perform, as well as her deadly boomerang and magical powers. The environments through which she runs are individual and realistic with the levels explored in eight-way

smooth scrolling.

Of special note are the explosions caused by a clash with motorbikes or pink cadillacs. The vehicle smoulders, then erupts into a cataclysmic explosion that rocks the Mega Drive. An incredibly large orange and red flaming gas cloud then fills half the screen, followed by bits of the wreckage and shreds of the occupants. The whole effect is stunning and well worth the immense time and patience it must have taken to get right.

The streets and buildings are claustrophobic concrete structures, full of murderous maniacs. All are colourful and intricately detailed to set the scene for a great game.

PROTIP On level two, the first wall of blocks that can be destroyed have two potions hidden inside.

Sound is above average with tunes playing throughout. However, I would have preferred something more violent and strung out. The in-game



1人用 アクションゲーム

PROFILE

EL VIENTO ● RENOVATION ● £44.99 ● OUT NOV

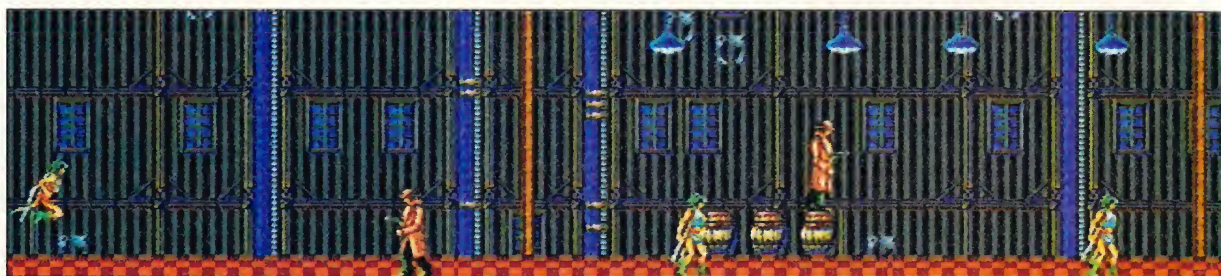
CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 16
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES continues

SUPPLIER

Ubi Soft
Saddlers House
100 Reading Road
Yateley, Camberley
Surrey GU17 7RX
(0252) 860299

music to *Streets of Rage* would have been a much more appropriate style, instead we have a run-of-the-mill tune that lacks body.

The difficulty level is perfect, with the first guardian not too hard to reach, but consequent levels increasing in hazards. I found the guardians



EL VIENTO

El Viento was originally released in Japan. You can get this version from those reliable guys at Console Concepts, 223b Waterloo Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2HS. Tel: (0782) 712759. The price is £34, but the Japanese manual is great – even with the Japanese text!



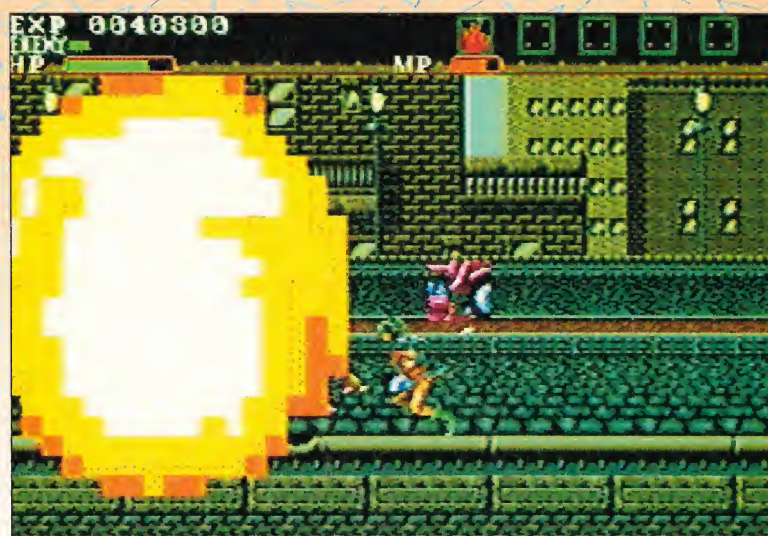
The woman to the right (known affectionately as Windy by her friends) forms a small part of the incredible title sequence in *El Viento*. Her vital statistics – for those interested – are 36-28-34. She, and her friend Earnest Evans (Pop, to close chums), are heavily into bondage – whips, chains, bottle tops and the like. Both Windy and Pop like nothing more than entering doubles rasping competitions. Already they have the prestigious title of West World Windy Winners.

to be surprisingly imaginative considering the well-trodden paths that most beat-'em-up games follow.

The first particularly impressed me with its ruthlessness and unnerving accuracy. For example, take out the main gun and the rockets start firing; destroy them and the controller gets

screen, with no difficulty settings to increase challenge, and the way you are transported back to the very start of a level if you are defeated.

Although this does add to the addictiveness and challenge, it could mar the playability and can lead to a jaded feeling when you die. The



out with his chain gun to finish you off. It's touches such as this that set *El Viento* apart from the crowd.

Collision detection is also excellent; you are never hampered by cling-on bad guys and can jump and kick freely to escape. Some fights are even conducted ten feet in the air in the explosion of a car!

The hosts of opponents such as Al Capone, Henry, Hastur, crouching snipers and annoying neighbours throwing furniture from their windows blend in well with their surroundings as they attempt to thwart you.

I only have two gripes with *El Viento*: the lack of options on the title

You won't see bigger or brighter explosions in any other game. *El Viento* is in a class of its own when it comes to the big bang.

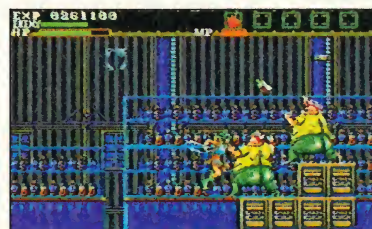
rapid chases across collapsing bridges, using gun-powder to blow up certain enemies and spanning deep ravines on wire-thin death

PROTIP In the building just before the first level guardian you have to get down to the bottom to use the door. If you descend further, there is another door with a strength potion in it. Very useful to top up before taking on the big guy.

slides, though, are all experiences to look forward to.

Above all, everything looks, sounds and plays well. What more could you ask for?

● Damian Butt



Level three (directly above and map) takes place in a warehouse. The violent fatties throw Newcastle Brown bottles at you; the trick is to use the dynamite barrels to blow them sky high.

VIENTO

GRAPHICS	90
▲ Vivid arcade graphics and original sprites.	
▲ Guardians and explosions are extra special.	
SOUND	82
▼ Tunes lack vitality and thumping beats.	
▲ Music throughout and many special FX.	
GAMEPLAY	85
▼ Guardians can be very tough at times.	
▲ Leaping, slashing action; very satisfying.	
CHALLENGE	92
▲ Will keep the average disemboweller happy.	
▲ Difficulty level is set just right.	
With super fast graphics and brutal gameplay, <i>El Viento</i> will take your breath away.	
PROSCORE	89

With the advent of the latest UEFA cup challenge, there's been an absolute surfeit of soccer games appearing on all formats, especially the Master System. But if you Mega Drive owners can't wait for your promised version of *Super Kick Off* (which still has no release date scheduled!), and if you resisted the temptation to buy *Tecmo World Cup 92* (SEGAPro#5, 69%), Mega Drive newcomers Virgin could have just the thing in *Euro Club Soccer*.

Featuring over 170 European clubs (including some you'll have never heard of), you'll never be short of opponents as you compete in a series of challenging knock-out rounds before proceeding to the final.

Up to eight players can compete in the cup – both against human and computer rivals – for the chance of winning this most prestigious of club football trophies, the European Cup!



Being programmed by Krisalis for Virgin, *Euro Club Soccer* is effectively a Sega version of the chart-topping (for months!) *Manchester United Europe*.

Featuring a completely different style of footy from *Champions of Europe*, *Euro Club* is viewed side-on and scrolls horizontally back and forth with the play, as opposed to the alternative up and down method. Neither are new styles of camera work, with *Champs of Europe* emulating *Kick Off*, and *Euro Club* following the Tecmo variation, *World Cup Soccer*. In fact this sort of



Above: free kicks are executed in an interesting way. A cursor is shifted to the area that you wish the ball to go. The press of a button completes the move.

view goes all the way back to *International Soccer* on the Commodore 64.

Before I start, I must confess my deep love for *Kick Off* and all its quirks and idiosyncrasies, and therefore my bias against such styles of play as this.

Saying that, though, I found *Euro Club* to be rather an easy game to like, with its bold colours and spiffing player animation.

There are two methods of play (simulation and arcade) and up to eight players can join in the fun. Team strips are fully alterable (shirt, shorts, socks and trim can be coloured in the most garish Day-Glo hue you can find), and the six varied control methods ensure that us ham-fisted players still have a fair chance!

Three levels of play are available and range in difficulty, and the match length can be anything from four to 90 minutes real-time, during which a selection of tunes play from a bank of

PRO TIP To beat the almost super-human keeper, pass the ball around inside the goal area. This'll bring him off his line, making a goal much easier.



18 sporting ditties. Sound FX are good but few; the ref. shouts "kick off" and blows his whistle, the ball makes a nice dull thud on being booted, and that's about it!

The boldly coloured title screen precedes the main action, which is played on a lovingly mown-and-rollered pitch. All of the players are named as they jog onscreen, and these names are true to the real-life team which you have chosen. The ref and his linesmen are next, and the game commences. The guy in black is rather harsh in my opinion, doling out yellow and red cards seemingly willy-nilly, but, in fairness, with no bias towards either team.

Players currently under your control are highlighted by a cross at their feet, and have a limited range of movements which comprise a kick, slide, lob and pass. Shot-power is relative to the length of time you hold down the kick button, and ranges from a pathetically weak dribble to a



Above: foul, ref! Only a yellow card after that particularly evil hack? Are you blind, mate? Next time it'll be a red, so watch those high tackles, okay?



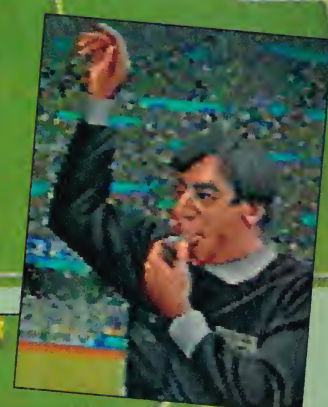
PROFILE

EURO CLUB SOCCER ● VIRGIN ● £TBA ● OUT JULY

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 8
STAGES 7
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES versus

SUPPLIER

Virgin Games
338a Ladbroke Grove
London
W10 5AH
(081) 9602255



Above: this is where your team acquires the wackiest strip you can think of. Colour co-ordination is not the order of the day, but beware of both teams wearing the same colour!



Above: a staggering eight players can compete (sadly not simultaneously, though!) in the championship, so rivalry is high!

powerful rocket shot almost guaranteed to take the ball to the back of the net! The goalie has other ideas though, and is a real star (his diving saves coming out of nowhere!).

Playability is a must in sports sims, and although not having the largest selection of moves, controlling a player is easy and fun. It's far superior to its most similar game, *Tecmo World Cup 92*, but can hardly stand up against the definitive *Kick Off*. If you're not a fan of *Kick Off*, though, this could well be the soccer game for you; it's a pleasant, professionally-finished product.

● James "Kevin" Scullion



EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER

GRAPHICS	88
▲ Superbly animated and coloured players.	
▲ Tasty mid- and end-game statics.	
SOUND	71
▲ The one referee sample is nice.	
▼ But the music during the match is unnecessary.	
GAMEPLAY	80
▲ Easy to get into, easy to play.	
▼ Few management tactics to tax your brain.	
CHALLENGE	81
▲ That goalie is rock!	
▼ But one shot will beat him every time.	

A well-executed addition to the ever-growing list of soccer sims.

PROSCORE 82



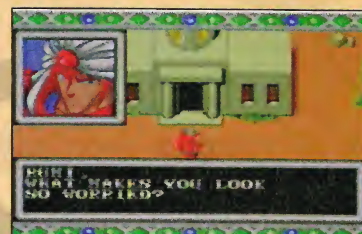
Sadler, a wandering warrior, sick of the greed he saw in the hearts of mortal man, brought holy war to the superpowers of the planet. Tired of the corruption that allowed the slaughter of so many innocents, he and his warriors revolted and overthrew the power-hungry leaders of the world.

Sadler's fighting prowess is equal to that of more than 100 soldiers, and because of this, he is idolized by the villagers. Due to their love of him, they became inspired to take up arms against the invaders, fighting for peace.

Soon after the restoration of peace, though, a rival country named Luciel sent their military forces to Sadler's home, and stole the source of the Earth's power, the Holimax! Nobody has ever escaped his pursuit, could Luciel's men be the first?



Attack of the mutant giant ants. Slash with your sword or use your magical powers to overcome them. Keep an eye out for holes in the floor and platforms above you. There is normally a quick route around these arcade sections, all you have to do is learn the route.



Whoops, your team have been buried under a rock pile - better find some new friends.



I'm still trying to work out exactly what type of game *Exile* is. Is it an RPG? Is it a platform romp? Is it a puzzler? Or is it a slash-'em-up? In fact, if the truth were told, it's a mishmash of all four, and more! A brave attempt has been made here to drag the RPG genre out of the closet (or should that be dungeon?), and, surprisingly, it works rather well. The continuity flows smoothly between the sub-game formats, only helping to increase the plausibility of such a far-fetched ideal!

You begin in RPG mode, looking down on Sadler from high above as you control his progress through the village. Meeting up with old friends, his band of warriors swells rapidly as he visits assorted shops, temples and residential buildings within the walls of the village, buying stores and weapons along the way.

Gathering information from bystanders, the plot unfurls. Travel to another land is necessary, and is the first of many island-hopping adventures. On landing on new shores, the screen format alters to accommodate the ensuing action. Magical parchments, gold and mystical mandalas must be found, but are heavily guarded by gruesome, ghoulish apparitions that are only too happy to sap your life-force, and with it your immortal soul! Your sword happily sends these tortured beings back to the depths of hell, but beware! Level guardians are tough, and take plenty of hits before shuffling off their (im)mortal coil!

Interaction with other characters is frequent, and necessary for your quest. Even an innocent chat with a farm labourer could hold the solution to your next problem.

The visuals begin with some well-crafted Jap cartoon intro statics of the story so far, and include panoramic horizons, and innocent



HOWEVER, THAT PEACE DID NOT LAST LONG. SADLER WAS ONCE AGAIN DRAWN INTO WAR IN THE DESERT HEAT. THE MILITARY OF LUCIEL, A RIVAL COUNTRY,

And so the story goes. Translated, you are Sadler who has been called on to kick the butts of the invaders. If he does it he'll be a total hero, if he doesn't, well he'll be dead so it won't matter. Pick your team and repel the invasion.



Sadler and his team have found the Prince. Unfortunately he has been badly wounded. You must find the rest of his crew and perform a weird ceremony to get back on the right path. The Prince (fool that he is) gave up his throne and money to chase a woman.





exile



PRO TIP Having trouble recruiting staff at the village? Hang around until dark and you'll be inundated with offers!

women and children being carved up by merciless invaders! Into the game proper, and the central sprites, although on the small side, are each easily distinguishable, and on meeting them head on, an exploded view of their face appears above the text of their message, in glorious hi-res technicolour. The scenery is superbly intricate, right down to the weeds growing through the cracks in the courtyard flooring, and the bricks left by stonemasons after completing a building.

The action screens, although graphically different, have still been well-executed. You have a wide range of movements, the best being your sword-swipe. Performing this leaves a huge blue swish-line through the air for added machismo! The attacking sprites are delightfully coloured, their good looks portraying the ferocity of their onslaught, and include killer butterflies that explode



when killed, bouncing caterpillars that go straight for the throat, and murderous mandalas that attack even in the sanctuary of a Buddhist temple! The backdrops range from dimly-lit caverns to marvellous stained-glass windows, and retain the high-quality feel evident throughout the game.

The in-game music is reminiscent of the *Shadow of the Beast* games. Tense and highly strung, the pitch-bending computerised wailing emanating from the speakers reminded me of armies waiting for the right moment to rush into battle. Atmospheric just isn't the word for these superb sounds! Each level has its own variation, tying in with the setting: for example, the music of the eastern islands has a very oriental feel. The sound effects are limited to the teletype noise of text appearing

onscreen, sword slashing and the thud as you take a shot from a bad guy.

Gameplay is fast and uninterrupted. Messages come in thick and fast from associates and must be rapidly deciphered for important news. Swarms of grunts attack constantly, and must be destroyed before sapping all of your energy. It's a totally convincing game! Some hard-core RPG fans may find it a bit easy, although the "arcade" elements may stump them, and vice-versa. Hard to pin down, but totally easy to lose yourself in, that's *Exile*!

● James 'Sadler' Scullion

PROFILE	EXILE ● RENOVATION ● £45 ● IMPORT	
	CART SIZE	8Mbit
	PLAYERS	1
	STAGES	10+
	SKILL LEVELS	1
	FEATURES	battery
	SUPPLIER	
	Console Concepts	
	The Village	
	Newcastle-under-Lyme	
	Staffordshire	
	ST5 1QB	
	☎(0782) 712759	

GRAPHICS	86
▲ Intricate in the extreme.	
▲ Large diversity of life-forms.	
SOUND	80
▲ Hauntingly melodious soundtrack.	
▼ Lack of sound effects.	
GAMEPLAY	84
▲ Constant, uninterrupted play.	
▲ Varied styles of action.	
CHALLENGE	83
▲ Some arcade sections are tough.	
▼ RPG sections a bit too easy!	
An excellent idea, very well implemented.	
PROSCORE	83

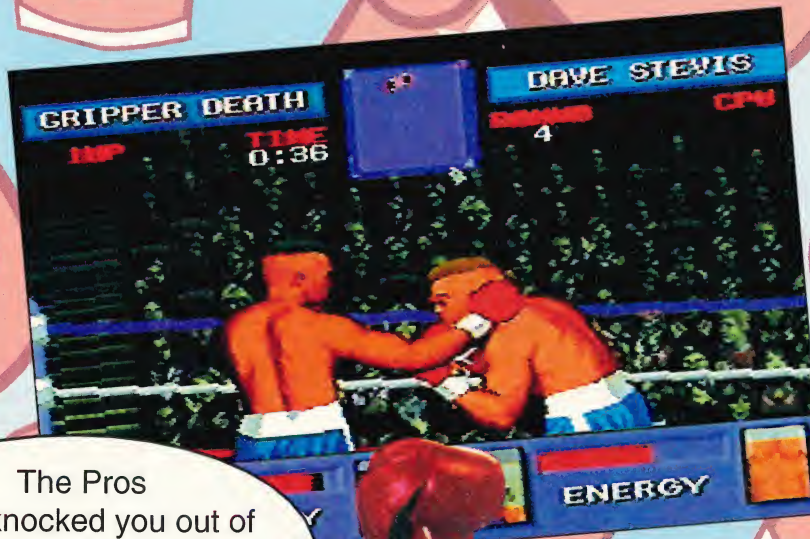


Let's get down to basics. *Evander Holyfield* is a strategy/training boxing sim that uses, for the first time on the Mega Drive, a spinning 360° view of the ring. This allows you to dance all over the ring while uttering threats like "Come on and fight you wimp" and creates a greater sense of realism.

The object, as in real life, is to beat hell out of any chump who gets in the way of the championship. But this is boxing with brains. A trainer feature between bouts allows your fresh-faced contender to pump iron and build up various attributes, including speed and stamina, which are essential when the bell rings and an ugly mug starts throwing punches at you. Boxers can be saved and retired at will, but in the end it all comes down to how well you can inflict pain and whether you've got enough bottle to grapple with the champ.



Big Bad Jacob is a mean critter. It's only the first round and he already has the luckless Ron on the ropes and in trouble. A swift punch in the face followed up with an upper cut, and the bald Soviet steamroller will be counting stars. "Yo, Adrianne... I did it!"



Still shots reveal just how good the graphics in *Evander* are. The hook is excellent for GBH of the skull and stunning your opponent.

The Pros have knocked you out of your own game, Evander. I'll see you in the ring,



The "Greatest" options lets you see who has beaten Evander's record of fifty million dollars. Evander's portrayed as unbeatable, so it makes smashing his ugly mug all the more enjoyable. As you can see, the Reaper has taken the record and consigned Evander to the scrap heap.



vander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing has come in for a lot of stick recently, which is a shame because it really is a knock-out of a game and a massive improvement over Sega's previous attempt, *Final Blow*. It has everything a sado-masochist could want: a host of criminal looking world contenders to pummel into the canvas, a save option to record your "Peter Perfect" and a handy training section that adds strategy and realism to the proceedings. As a die-hard fan of any game with a bit of GBH in it, I loved every minute of *Evander Holyfield*.

The graphics and central animation are of a high standard and not once did I or anybody else in the

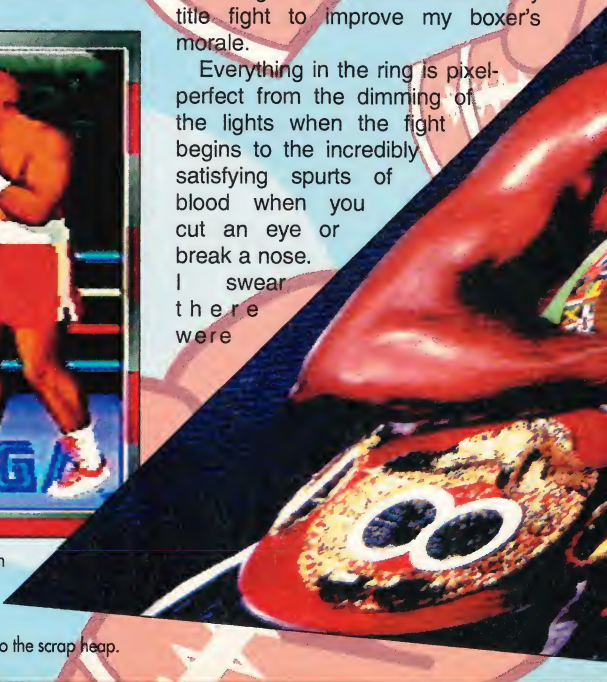
PROTIP



The most effective move is to use long punches, one to the stomach, then when your opponent ducks down to cover, punch him briskly in the face and then move in close and try a couple of hooks, alternating between left and right blows (these do the worst damage). In no time at all, your opponent will hit the canvas and stay down (if he has any sense).

office ever complain of the boxers punching too slow or losing unfairly. Each fighter has their own characteristics and after a while you'll look forward to beating up your least favourite chump in a one-sided grudge match. I personally enjoy thrashing a rank outsider after every title fight to improve my boxer's morale.

Everything in the ring is pixel-perfect from the dimming of the lights when the fight begins to the incredibly satisfying spurts of blood when you cut an eye or break a nose. I swear there were

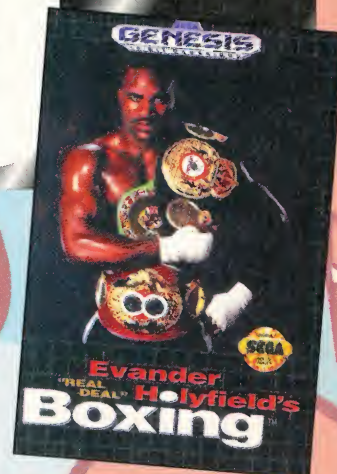




Evander "REAL DEAL" Holyfield's Boxing



The moment you beat Evander, or whoever is in the hot seat, you must fight any gimboird challenger who wants a shot at the title.

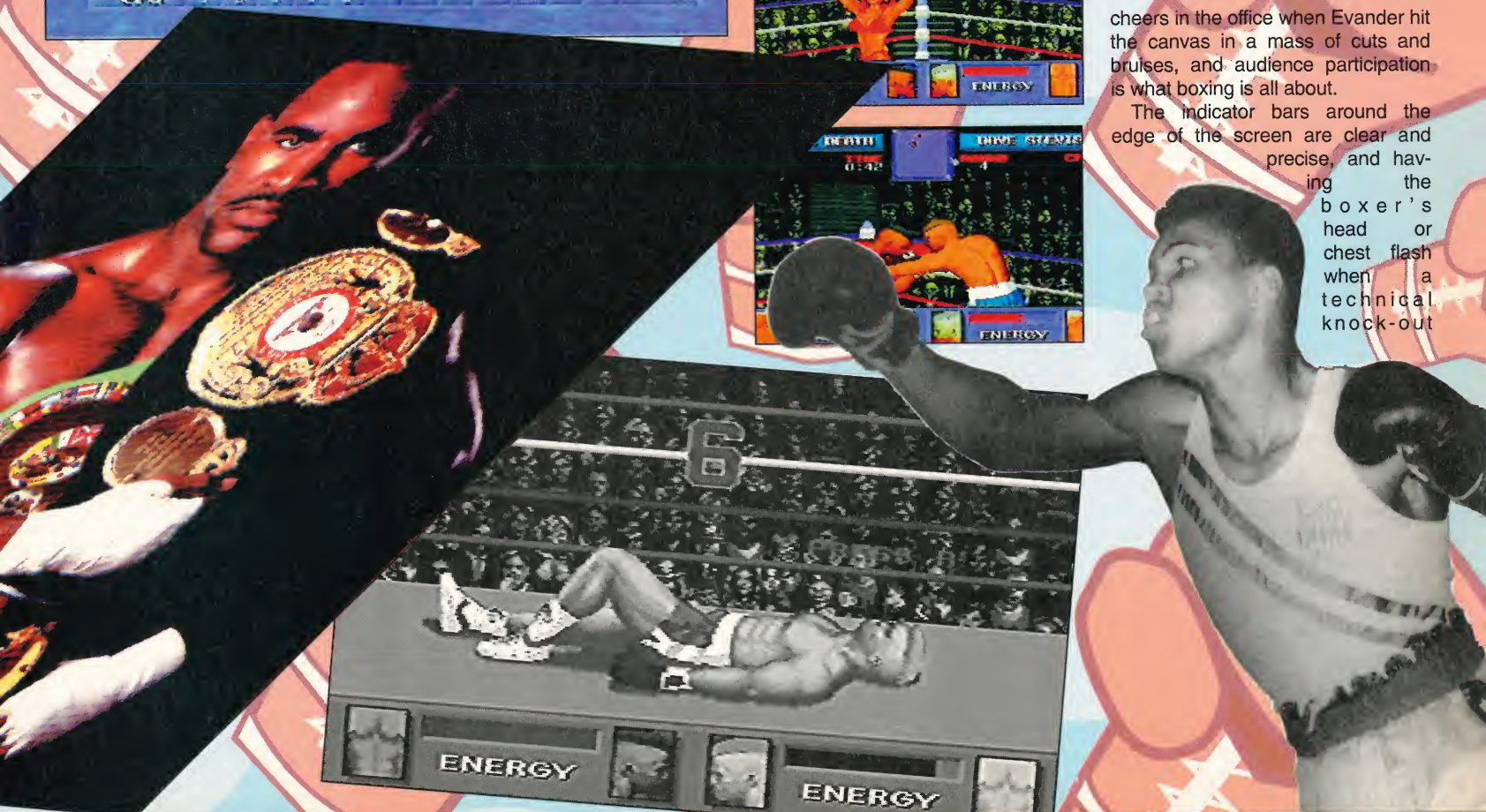


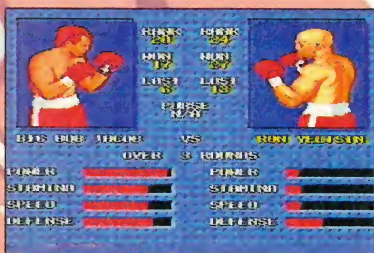
Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing is an official Sega game but we got our world ranked copy for £36.95 from AMS Electronic Games at 9 Hay Lane, Kingsbury, London NW9 9EL. Telephone (081) 4502166 to get your copy now before stocks disappear quicker than Evander's title.



cheers in the office when Evander hit the canvas in a mass of cuts and bruises, and audience participation is what boxing is all about.

The indicator bars around the edge of the screen are clear and precise, and having the boxer's head or chest flash when a technical knock-out





Sometimes you need to totally cream a fighter to boost your moral; this one's a right wimp!



was imminent is clever and eye-catching. I also liked small graphical touches such as the partially clothed young lady holding the round banner and the way you can taunt your opponent with inviting fists and shouting insults; totally unnecessary but highly enjoyable. The spinning ring technique is clever but hardly practical and unfortunately very jerky. Many times I kept a direction pressed and the whole ring span at an alarming rate, finally leaving me stuck in a corner with EZ Ray punching my guts!

Boxing has never been known for musical prowess (just listen to those dreadful Rocky soundtracks!) and *Evander Holyfield* is no different. The main tune and those accompanying a win and training screens are ear-wrenching and painful, and you would be well advised to keep the volume well down until the fight starts. After the metallic ting of the bell each round is an acoustic orgy of grunts, slaps and heckling from the crowd, which really makes the atmosphere electric. Speech is recognisable and well received, especially when a "Stop the fight!" heralds a victory.

I especially like the training feature which lifts the game above the purely beat-'em-up mentality. Now you have to think about the structural integrity of your contender and this heavily influences the events in the ring. For example, sending a

The timer tells you how long before you to spit in the bucket and get some of that important energy back. During your early fights you only have six rounds to fight, when you're tops, this is increased to 12.

This overhead view of the ring is very useful if you want to avoid getting caught on the ropes, if you are in danger, press the joy pad towards the centre of the ring and you will create some space for an another attack.

Smashing the power bar down is entirely dependant on how good your stamina is. The higher it is, the quicker the bar rejuvenates. Evander's constitution is incredible but by constantly using left and right hooks, you will eventually beat him in a technical knock-out. Hit the canvas three times and it's all over.



If sweat sprays from your opponent's forehead then you know he's losin' it. Continuous punches to the head are quicker than body blows but if his stamina is good your attacks need to be relentless.

When you consider that each boxer receives about a hundred punches to the head each round, it's no wonder most of them have the IQ of a small water biscuit. Still, they can always do pantomime.

The body indicator takes quite a bit of punishment. It gradually turns grey the more gut blows you get in. When it reaches the bottom, it begins to flash and then a few more hits means a technical knock-out.

slower but powerful boxer against a lightning fast jabber who's quick on his feet spells certain disaster, it is this tactical aspect that gives this game the edge.

The save option lets you return again and again to sustain your career with the ultimate aim of becoming the greatest fighter who ever lived with an indelible record screen. I would have preferred to have chosen when to save, so as to avoid costly mistakes and losses.

Unfortunately, *Evander Holyfield's* greatest asset is also its folly. Volleys of jabs, upper cuts and hooks can be effortlessly strung together in competition and as a result it is very easy to find a routine of moves that beat nearly every boxer without breaking a sweat. Once you hit the top ten, the pros get wise to your tricks but a quick jab to the nether regions followed quickly with a punch to their glass jaws and it's all over. Rapid combinations of this and many other moves should catapult you through the ranks but this ruins the challenge of what is otherwise a superb boxing sim. Luckily the two-player option is nothing short of excellent and more than enough fun can be derived from



How was it for you? The fight's over, your bones are fusing together and it's time to start training for the next one. Different exercises improve your attributes; speed is essential but power and stamina will sustain you in a long bout. If you win, pick three, if not choose two then one.

smashing your best friend into next week.

Evander himself is embarrassingly easy to beat once you have a system and for a game that's based around him, it's laughable to see him lose his marbles and fall from grace. At my last look he was ranked 25 and going down like a lead balloon. So much for

a realistic game licence, eh Evander?

● Damian "Bruiser" Butt

PROFILE

EVANDER HOLYFIELD ● SEGA ● £39.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	Sega UK
PLAYERS	2		16 Portland Road
STAGES	30 boxers		London
SKILL LEVELS	1		W11 4LA
FEATURES	battery save		©(071) 7278070

GRAPHICS ▲ Impressive, large boxer sprites. ▲ Excellent statics, smooth animations.	85
SOUND ▲ Gruesome grimaces and cheers. ▼ Terrible musical accompaniment.	79
GAMEPLAY ▲ Rapid blood-thirsty rounds. ▲ Great variety of opponents.	90
CHALLENGE ▲ Takes time to suss out the moves. ▼ Ultimately easy to beat Evander.	74
<p>Low on challenge but still the best boxer in the ring.</p> <p>PROSCORE 81</p>	

Whenever anyone plays a racing game (real-life driver or not), a whole new persona seems to emerge. Gone are the cautious approaches to junctions, speed limits, the highway code, etc. All that is replaced by an insane desire to drive around hairpin bends at over 300 kph, while overtaking an opponent if at all possible.

With the spiralling prices of driving lessons nowadays, it's just as well there's a couple of car releases this month on the Mega Drive. Okay, the price of the cart may be the same as three or four lessons, but at least you don't get a massive repair bill every time you slam the car into the wall. And, let's face it, if you're hoping to be any good, that's what you'll be doing half the time in *F-1 Circus*.

There are so many options in *F-1 Circus* it could get confusing – after all, drivers are never credited with having much intelligence. These add great scope to the game and allow you to change things from the way your car steers and the type of tyres you use to external elements like the weather. This makes *F-1 Circus* VERY realistic.

Compared to *F-1 Grand Prix* (reviewed this issue), *F-1 Circus*'s graphics may not seem quite as good, but they suit the gameplay perfectly. The main car is smaller, and fixed at the bottom of the screen, which gives the impression of more track being on screen. However, the game moves a tad quicker, so the corners come up just as quickly. All the bends and straights of your favourite tracks have been perfectly recreated, even down to boats and roadside cafés in Monaco.

While the visuals are great, the sound is a little disappointing. The engine pitch sounds more like a 50cc bike than the throaty roar of a F-1 car. There are no skidding or crash-

ing effects which severely effects the atmosphere of the game. The music compensates for this with ten thumping tunes to choose from. Personally, my favourite is With A Rush, but then my tastes in music are quite controversial.

There are around a dozen courses to compete on (not including endurance and test courses) and every one is VERY tough. And the season can be a long one, so it's great that the cart is battery-backed.

If you like your action stupidly fast and furious, with a little bit of strategy,

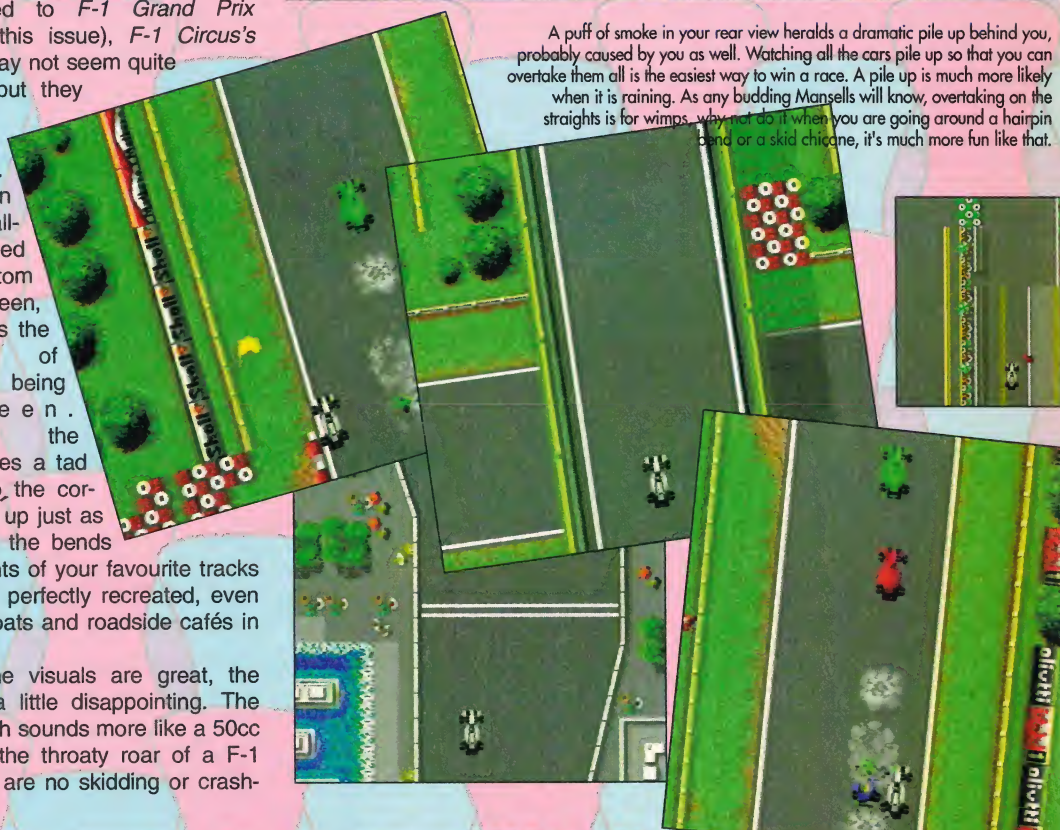
PROFILE

F-1 CIRCUS ● **NICHIBUTSU** ● **£38** ● **IMPORT**

CART SIZE 6Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 20
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES gamesave

SUPPLIER
Console Concepts
The Village
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1QB
☎(0782) 712759

A puff of smoke in your rear view heralds a dramatic pile up behind you, probably caused by you as well. Watching all the cars pile up so that you can overtake them all is the easiest way to win a race. A pile up is much more likely when it is raining. As any budding Mansells will know, overtaking on the straights is for wimps, why not do it when you are going around a hairpin bend or a skid chicane, it's much more fun like that.



PRO TIP If you want to go for the faster cars, then make sure you adjust your car to cope. The steering needs to be a lot lighter and the brakes should be improved.

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Very detailed tracks and scenery.
- ▼ The cars are a bit too small.

84

SOUND

- ▲ Plenty of great tunes during race.
- ▼ A few poor effects.

82

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Very addictive racing action.
- ▲ Requires real talent to master.

88

CHALLENGE

- ▲ The opposition are tough, very tough.
- ▲ The sheer speed makes it a real challenge.

85

The most realistic racing game on the Mega Drive.

PROSCORE 85

then go for this. I dare say *F-1 Grand Prix* will sell tons more, but that's only because it looks a lot better. *F-1 Circus* is a much more intelligently programmed game.

● Les "Senna's ego" Ellis



Tension is rising all over the world. Certain political leaders are becoming too big for their boots. Threats and counter threats are coming in from all sides. The world is on the brink of a third global war unless someone can restore the peace.

As head of the UN peace-keeping force, it is up to America to enforce a strict code of operation through these tough times. But, as usual, a few countries are pushing their luck and the Yanks have decided to send in their Lockheed F-22 ATF to sort it out. As NATO's top pilot, the Americans have handed this amazing feat of new technology over to you.

Your missions will take you all over the world, but your objective is simply to get in there, alleviate the problem, and get out before anyone can say "international incident".

The world's in turmoil, its future lies in your hands. (God help us!)

light sims on the Mega Drive? Er, shurely shome mishtake. The Mega Drive's only good for shoot-'em-ups and RPGs, you'd have thought, but no, Electronic Arts have



PRO TIP Learn to remote pilot the TV-guided missiles as they are more powerful than any others.



One of these missiles is enough to take out a whole building. They're expensive though, so use them sparingly.

yet again confounded the critics and produced the impossible. Yes, every normal flight sim feature is included, all wrapped up in lightning quick 3-D to make this a perfect adaptation of the Amiga's F/A-18 Interceptor.

For a machine that hasn't received many vector games, EA have done an amazing job with the Mega Drive. Zooming low over the landscape is pretty hair-raising, especially if you have a MiG on your tail and a couple of SAM sites ahead of you. But that's no trouble for the cool pilot, because this accurate simulation has a bevy of missiles and anti-missile equipment. All this is viewed from a superb cockpit, which actually gives you a decent view of the outside without cramming the screen.

The internal and external views are handled very well. There are also extra views, like those from the nose of a guided missile, which bring the game bang up to date and enhance the atmosphere.

There are over 100 missions to be flown against land, sea and air targets all

F-22 INTERCEPTOR



With F-22 Interceptor, you get all the latest arms from the USA's weapons store. Before each mission, your plane is equipped with missiles, flares and chaff. The amount you carry stays exactly the same for every mission - you don't even have to worry about weighing down your plane.

2

PTOR



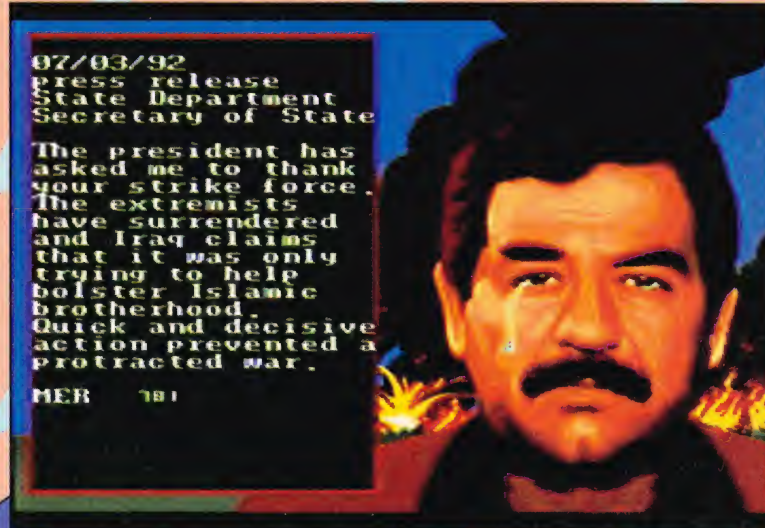
portrayed in super-fast 3-D. Unlike some flight sims, though, these aren't restricted to one part of the world; one day you could find yourself fighting Saddam in Iraq, while the next Gorbys could be thanking



The MiG is in your sights – but so is the ground. As any Top Gun fan will know, the Americans struggled in the fight for air supremacy till the more manoeuvrable and quicker F-22 took to the skies.

you for saving the Soviet Union. Real Pros should go for the Aces Challenge, though. Here you will take on teams of enemy fighters in a head-to-head challenge.

Admittedly, F-22 isn't as complex as some flight



Ha! Sod you, Saddam. As Baghdad burns in the distance, Saddam sheds a tear for the brothers who have lost their lives – and nuclear missiles...

does not require pixel precision and loads of over-compensation.

This is the first true flight sim on the Mega Drive and it'll be tough to beat. It's true that MicroProse may be entering the Mega Drive screen soon with conversions of their top flight sims, but yet again, EA have got there first to breathe a fresh genre into the Mega Drive. Good on 'em.

● Les "Iceman" Ellis

Keep a cool head and those Soviet-built MiGs will soon start dropping like flies. And flies are just what they act like as they stick to you like you're...

PROTIP During play, press B and C together to access a screen that enables you to change the gameplay options, allowing you to have unlimited missiles, invulnerability, etc.



sims on computer, but for sheer addictive playability this is unbeatable. Sure, the amazing range of graphical effects help, but ultimately it comes down to the superb control method. While it feels realistic, it

Woooooaaaaaaahhh! I've heard about a close landing, but this is suicidal! Even the stupidist pilot knows that your wheels are supposed to be closer to the ground than your nose. Either pull up now or prepare to meet your maker.

Waste no more time, press START to take you into the next mission. Saddam is up to his old tricks again, so get in there fast and save the day for the Americans.

GRAPHICS	92
▲ Quick and smooth 3-D with great detail.	
▲ Many internal and external views.	
SOUND	85
▲ Atmospheric in-flight effects.	
▲ Pleasant intro music.	
GAMEPLAY	95
▲ Easy to get to grips with the controls.	
▲ Mission designer adds extra fun.	
CHALLENGE	95
▲ Hundreds of missions.	
▲ Long-term playability guaranteed.	
F-22 is quite simply brilliant. End of story.	
PROSCORE	94

PROFILE	F-22 INTERCEPTOR	EA	£39.99	OUT NOV
	CART SIZE	6Mbit		
	PLAYERS	1		
	STAGES	5		
	SKILL LEVELS	1		
	FEATURES	designer		
	SUPPLIER	Electronic Arts		
		Langley Business Centre		
		11-49 Station Road		
		Langley, Nr Slough		
		Berkshire SL3 8YN		
		(0753) 549442		



Hold on tight, folks, your Game Gear has just entered the *Fantasy Zone*. Thousands of pan-dimensional aliens have infiltrated the zone and plan to mine it for resources. Only you can stop the invading masses in your small plasma fighter. Unluckily for you, the ship only comes equipped with low energy lasers and a single-shot bomb. Still, you've faced these kinds of odds before, so what's new about this one?

To throw you off course, the aliens have slipped a Mickey Finn your way to play with your senses. Now all you can see are putrid pinks, gaudy greens and yucky yellows – argh, you're in hippy heaven! And you're all out of lentils, green tea, smelly socks and Filloyd albums.

Get your shades on, grow your hair and enter the strange and terrifying world of *Fantasy Zone*.

Weird is the only word that aptly describes *Fantasy Zone*. Weird just about says it all: strange, bizarre and eerie. The original Master System version – which came out some five

years ago! – shocked the senses with its vivid colours and lightning fast gameplay, but the Game Gear version seems to have lost something in translation.

The game starts with a very promising title screen which waves

PROFILE	FANTASY ZONE ● SANRITSU ● £24 ● IMPORT
CART SIZE	2Mbit
PLAYERS	1
STAGES	7
SKILL LEVELS	1
FEATURES	n/a
	SUPPLIER Console Concepts 223b Waterloo Road Cobridge Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST6 2HS (0782) 712759



At the end of each of the seven levels, you'll encounter a large – but usually cute – mechanical monstrosity who will try to clip your ship's wings. Above are pictured the first six, but we'll leave the seventh guy as a surprise. Sadly, all the guardians are very simply drawn and present little challenge.

from side to side when you start up. And without any options to adjust game parameters, you're straight into the game.

Sound consists of a dreamy tune playing on the title screen and a cheerful march accompanying play. Laser and bomb effects are not as impressive though.

Just one look at the game will give you some idea of the visual delight of all the levels. Each one has its own particularly twisted style, combining the most disgusting colours with strange shapes in the background. This type of graphical sadism has

PRO TIP The larger creatures can be destroyed with either three bombs or a volley of laser bolts. They release money, but be warned it disappears quickly if left to bounce.

Also, don't leave it too late to enter the shop. It doesn't wait for ever, and it will be a long time before it reappears. The only decent weapons are back shot and five-way shot.

How many games can you mention that use the colour to increase difficulty?

All this is let down by appalling gameplay. The control is very sluggish, and often has you going in completely the wrong direction. This problem is multiplied by the terrible four-way of the Game Gear, which doesn't do any favours for gamers. And then there's the collision detection, which is a complete joke.

The playability severely flaws this version and will disappoint anyone looking forward to playing a portable version of their fave Master System game.

● Damian Butt



Whoever said the Game Gear couldn't display many colours onscreen? *Fantasy Zone* must use every single colour there is – and few more, too. Just look at those dreamy backgrounds, whatever was the programmer on?



FANTASY ZONE



The first version of the infamous *Fantasy Zone* came out in 1986 from Sega on the Master System. Since then, it has also appeared in fine form on the PC Engine.

gained quite a cult following over the years; there was even a hidden *Fantasy Zone* screen on the Mega Drive version of *Arnold Palmer Golf*. Even the gold, which drops from waves of freaky aliens when you disintegrate them, is intentionally hard to see because of the crazy backdrops.

GRAPHICS	71
▼ The simplistic guardians are beyond a joke.	
▲ Totally original and over-the-top backgrounds.	
SOUND	75
▼ In-game tune soon irritates.	
▲ Original, wacky tune welcomes you to play.	
GAMEPLAY	58
▼ Collision detection is totally off.	
▼ Sluggish control is hard to get used to.	
CHALLENGE	79
▼ Very frustrating to begin with.	
▲ Provides a good, long-term challenge.	
The simple delights of the original version were okay in 1986, but we're in the Nineties now...	
PROSCORE	65



FIGHTING MASTERS



Let's face it, *Fighting Masters* is *Beast Warriors* (also reviewed in this issue) viewed from the side – but thankfully with a bit of playability thrown in for good measure.

The concept of a head-to-head, monster beat-'em-up is a good one and very appealing, but it does seem that in the flurry to get amazing graphics and varied creatures, the gameplay has taken a back seat.

Graphics here are coin-op quality with 13 different foes to defeat and lifelike backgrounds such as an



Your opponent drops down from the light beam. You are about to enter the realm of the fighting masters.

through a shaft of light. This is a neat touch and it certainly makes a change from the usual side entrances. As far as the actual monsters go, they make a change from boring old human fighters, too. I liked Dio who was definitely not a "weeeeee", and all the challengers are detailed and brightly coloured. You wouldn't want to meet any of these guys in a dark alley.



with gruesome slashes is enormous. Two-player mode is essential and this improves the game's durability, but I have no idea why any-

one would want a boring Watch option. So far, I have yet to come across a beat-'em-up fan who didn't want to get straight to the action. In this case, the action can appear stunted and sometimes the fluidity of attack is lost due to jerky animation. It can also be painfully easy to reach the final stage with certain characters, which makes their inclusion pointless. I hardly think a short blue blob has much chance against a 200ft killing machine!



● Damian "scarface" Butt

Okay, folks, it's eyes down for the big barny. In the left corner we have Larry the wimpy human with all the fighting capabilities of a sun-drenched lettuce, and in the right corner we have a huge, red armoured-plated killing machine by the name of Zrygrunte.

Remember, it's a no-holds-barred fight to the death. No running, hiding or climbing up the walls, only good clean cheating and underhand punches. I don't want to see any of you being noble and merciful, that's not what we came here to see. Now get out there and do your worst, then battle the super beast on level 13 who'll make you more embarrassed than Norman Lamont – and that's bad!



PROFILE	FIGHTING MASTERS		TRECO	£38	IMPORT
	CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER		
	PLAYERS	2	Console Concepts		
	STAGES	13	The Village		
	SKILL LEVELS	3	Newcastle-under-Lyme		
	FEATURES	teampay	Staffordshire		
				ST5 1QB	(0782) 712759

island, and the arena with its great statues. The lightning effect is suitably portrayed, if a little prolonged, and some of the statics are elegant.

I particularly liked the way the pugilists were teleported to the combat zone Mr Bean-style



The gameplay is actually not that bad – certainly a big improvement on *Beast Warriors*. You really get a true feeling of achievement when your opponent hits the dirt, and perfecting the moves is an enjoyable distraction for a few hours. Obviously the programmers have never played *Streets of Rage* or they would have noticed the popularity of an immense number of original moves. Such aerobatics are restricted to just three or four attacks in *FM* and consequently the gameplay can be extremely repetitive.

Music is lively but unoriginal, and the SFX are not worth shouting about. This is such a wasted opportunity because with so many exotic opponents, the scope for weird screams or battle cries combined

PRO TIP The best dude to have is definitely the chick, Medusa (bottom). I know she looks like a fat blue slob with all the agility of Jonathan Ringhole, but once you master her fighting technique, she's one tough turkey.



GRAPHICS	81
▲ Visually stunning sprites.	
▼ Animation is way too slow sometimes.	
SOUND	69
▼ Heard it all before.	
▼ Pathetic attack noises.	
GAMEPLAY	65
▲ There is some fun to be had.	
▼ But initially very difficult to pick up.	
CHALLENGE	47
▲ Computer cheats at every opportunity.	
▼ Very easy to get to the ultimate stage.	
Great visuals, but hardly any long-term challenge. Only for wimps.	
PROSCORE	66



Ferrari have had some of today's greatest drivers in their team, Nigel Mansell and Alain Prost among them, but have still failed to win the world championship in recent years. Even so, just the name Ferrari conjures up the sights and sounds of formula one. The crowds still roar at the sight of a Ferrari car, and there's no doubt that in its sparkling red livery, it is the epitome of a formula one racing machine.

But with Ferrari's recent bad fortune, and Williams' and McLaren's total dominance of the sport, Flying Edge's licence of the Italian team is something of a surprise. Also of immense shock is the fact that *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge* isn't actually a new game; it's a repackaged version of a Japanese racer that came out a few months ago. Flying Edge are just full of surprises...

As a mildly interested arm-chair fan of formula one racing, ever since I heard Flying Edge were to tackle a Ferrari-licensed game I was expecting something to rival the great *Super Monaco GP*.

Picking the Japanese developers Varie to program the game as first sight seems a shrewd move – after all, they were the same people who created *F-1 Grand Prix* (SEGAPro#4, 90%). To put the Ferrari licence to this game wouldn't have been a disaster; a cop out perhaps, but not a disaster. But Flying Edge seem to have had some bad luck in inheriting Varie's next game, *F-1 Hero*, to slap the licence on. Admittedly, it is innovative – being the first Mega Drive game to have split-screen racing – but it fails to convey the racing feel of *F-1 GP*.

That's not to say no time has gone into this game, just one look at the comprehensive options proves that. From the main menu, you get to enter a grand prix for real, have a free practice on a track of your choice, or go head-to-head against a human opponent (without any other cars on the track).

Everything is presented in a very slick fashion, with seemingly digitised pictures showing a range of events from the start of the race on the title screen, to a car being hoisted up on a crane if you retire from a race. All



Two-player mode is the most fun you can have with this Ferrari. Here we see Les coming up to lap James for the second time on the easiest track of the lot! Haw, haw! Tough luck, Scullion!



these bits look great, it's just a pity the actual in-game graphics don't reach the same standard.

The racing screen is split into two with the top half either showing your opponent in a versus match or your racing stats and a track map if in grand prix mode. Along with your stats, you also get a picture of your



car, with bits of it turning different colours to indicate damage.

With only half the screen taken up for racing, you'd expect it to be packed with detail and objects, but this is not the case. The cars are adequately designed but don't have the sleek lines you would expect from an F-1 car. The movement on

Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge

PROFILE

FERRARI GP CHALLENGE ● FLYING EDGE ● £39.99 ● OUT SEPT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 20 tracks
SKILL LEVELS 4
FEATURES versus, password

SUPPLIER
Flying Edge
4 Walcote Place
Winchester
Hants
SO23 9AP
(0962) 877788



PRO TIP



To achieve maximum success, you will need to set up your car to suit the conditions. Read the weather icons, note the type of corners on the track and set the tyres and suspension to give the optimum performance. Make sure you have a good set of brakes, too, because you WILL need to use them on the corners.

the track is abysmal; the cars are very jerky and tend to vanish when they get in front of you. Track detail is limited to a couple of colours when it rains and some simple signposts. The horizon scrolls from left to right but never gets any closer, although it does vary from track to track.

The music that greets you when you start up is a groovy little foot tapper, and serves its purpose well, getting your adrenalin pumping faster as the race gets nearer.

Sadly, when the music fades out and the racing starts, you are treated to some of the worst sound effects around. On the start grid, the engine gives quite a throaty roar but when you put your foot to the floor, it changes to an annoying high pitched whine that soon starts your teeth rattling. You don't even get a satisfying explosion when you crash, you just hear a little ping and lose all speed.

There are 16 grand prix circuits to race over, plus four extra ones to test your overall driving skill. But after a few games they will probably all start looking the same. As there's no scenery, every corner looks the same at 300kph.

The range of cars available to you means that if you choose the right one, you'll always get a challenging race. Computer opponents are generally tough, but as you can often drive straight through them with no detriment to your car, they can easily be overtaken.

The novelty of accruing damage is quite a neat idea, but it's very easy to have a clear lap. And even if you do choose the wrong tyres, a visit to the pits isn't exactly awe-inspiring. Finding the pits is just a case of stopping on the side of the road, and when you do, there isn't a pit crew in sight.

This game's major flaw is lack of atmosphere. Pretty title graphics and jingly music can only do so much. When you enter the racing, there's nothing around – the pit crew have



Now this track's a bit of a challenge! James is ripping up the tarmac, leaving Les eating exhaust fumes. Way to go, Scully! Sadly he had to pull out early due to engine trouble. Hiss, boo, hiss!



The pits! Choose your car, then uprate everything in sight! Shocks, engine performance, brakes, tyres and spoilers can all be tweaked to the max. Then it's time to hit the turbos and go, go, go!



Here's where you get to choose what your player looks like. Unfortunately, they've all got footballer haircuts, just like Damian!

had the day off and scenery is unheard of. Speed is usually given as the reason for this, but you don't even get any impression of this. Only the scrolling white lines down the centre of the road indicate you're moving, with 20kph feeling pretty much like 200kph. Overall, this suf-

fers similar faults to *Super Monaco GP 2* on the Master System (reviewed on page 46), but with games like the original *SMGP* and *F-1 GP* around, there's no excuse for this on the Mega Drive.

● Les "Enzo" Ellis

THE RED DEVILS

Flying Edge's *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge* is the same as Varie's *F-1 Hero* but how did this come about?

Way back, UK NES developer System 3 secured a licence from Ferrari in Italy and programmed a game for Nintendo. However, System 3 didn't have a Sega publishing licence at the time, so they sold the Sega rights onto Flying Edge in the States.



Next, Flying Edge's US office obtained the rights from Varie to publish *F-1 Hero* outside of Japan. To save time and money, Flying Edge put the two together and simply renamed

F-1 Hero to *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge*.

All this was unknown to Flying Edge's UK marketing people, so when we rang them up and told them of the similarity they were, as you can imagine, mightily surprised.

However, due to the fact that *F-1 Hero* hasn't been widely available in the UK for too long (as it only came in on import in June), Flying Edge reckon it shouldn't damage the sales of *Ferrari* when it's released officially in September.



GRAPHICS

▲ Plenty of stills to break up the monotony.
▼ Jerky movement and little detail on sprites.

69

SOUND

▲ Get down and boogie to that title music.
▼ Terrible effects grind away at your patience.

56

GAMEPLAY

▲ Two-player mode makes for some mean races.
▼ No feeling of speed means it gets very boring.

70

CHALLENGE

▲ Tough opposition and loads of circuits.
▼ Appalling collision detection means an unfair

73

It may be new, but it's the worst Mega Drive racing game for a while.

PROSCORE

68



"Yabba Dabba Doo!" shouts a relieved Fred Flintstone, as the Friday bell rings. Fred is particularly happy this weekend because it's the Bedrock Super-Bowl final tonight. As you know, bowling is Fred's passion and in tonight's heat he's lined up to play his friend and rival Barney Rubble.

Unfortunately, Wilma does not share Fred's love of the game. Fred promised his loving wife that he would redecorate the living room tonight, and Wilma is going to make sure he keeps his promise. If he's lucky, Fred will be able to paint the living room and leave in time for the bowling tournament.

But everything isn't quite as easy as it seems. For a start Pebbles is at home intent on causing havoc with her dad's painting. Then, on the way to the bowling alley, the car gets a broken wheel. At this rate, will Fred ever make the Super-Bowl?

If Grand Slam set out to create a cartoon atmosphere, then they have surely succeeded. The title screen for *The Flintstones* is very colourful and cheerful with a full screen static picture of Fred and his friends.

In keeping with the young targeting of the game, there is just one option: to play the irritating music or not. This limitation is one of *The Flintstones'* main flaws. If you're not a member of the extremely young audience that this is aimed at, then there's no way you can alter the game to suit you.



You're on the way to the bowling alley with your mate Barney. However, you've got to negotiate lethal rocks which will cause havoc with your tires if struck. Don't take too long though...

The introductory sequence showing Fred sliding down Dino's tail and leaping to Wilma is humorous and well-drawn, providing the vital link with the comedy cartoon. In fact, humour features heavily in this licence and touches such as the lizard paint brush, a wandering Pebbles and a dinosaur car jack, are a welcome relief from the goblins and runes that we're used to.

The graphics are some of the best I've seen on the Master System: brightly coloured sprites with minimal clash. Fred's rough, cave-man look is particularly impressive. The prehistoric feel is continued onto the control panel with informative displays roughly hewn from solid rock. This, along with the occasional static shot, adds atmosphere to a game

PRO TIP Put Pebbles back into her playpen to stop her scribbling on your newly painted wall. You will also have to collect your brush again. On level three, simply copy Barney's power and direction to win.

which revolves around it.

The first level, painting the living room, although well-presented is marred by a very awkward control method. It is far too easy to miss a tiny spot of wall and find the timer running down too quickly to rectify it.

Similarly, level two looks like it could contain some fun, but it is far too short. Jump a few rocks in your



car and you're there; no bridges to cross, no animated dangers like pterodactyls dropping rocks, and above all, no challenge.

The third stage begins well. The comical graphics of the bowling are lively, but it is flawed by another

FRUSTRATION FACTOR

With just four levels, *The Flintstones* will not be a tough game to finish. Even the huge differences in controls and style do not make the levels more enduring.

The first level is frustratingly hard due to the time limit. The second, third and fourth levels are far too easy and present no real challenge.

Remember, *The Flintstones* has been designed for what Grand Slam think are the bulk of Master System owners - very young kids.

Because of this the ProScore rating has been adjusted to accommodate what the programmers were aiming for. They were after an attractive, but extremely simple and easy concept, and that is exactly what they have got.

If you've been playing games for years, you'll be severely disappointed.

PROFILE	THE FLINTSTONES ● GRANDSLAM ● £29.95 ● OUT NOW	
	CART SIZE	2Mbit
	PLAYERS	1
	STAGES	4
	SKILL LEVELS	1
	FEATURES	n/a
SUPPLIER Grand Slam Video 56 Leslie Park Road Croydon Surrey CR0 6TP 081 655 3494		



THE FLINT



Fred readies himself for a strike; move up and down for the angle.

The pin indicator shows how many are left to drop.

This controls the amount of power you put behind the ball.

Changes from right to left; use it to aim your shot.

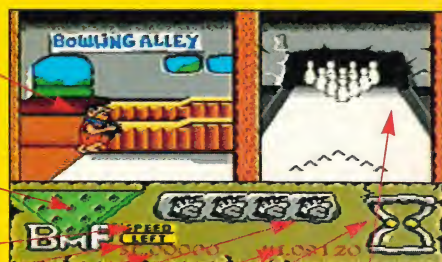
Your current score.

The number of balls (lives) left.

High score (usually Barney!).

The hour glass is used in all sections to indicate remaining time.

Your view of the alley. Get a strike to get ahead.



peculiar control method that doesn't convey the feeling of bowling. This is a shame because a decent bowling game would have really increased the game's playability, but this attempt is just like the other levels – too predictable and far too easy.

The final level at last promises a large challenge, with a decent size



Fred comes face to face with a long-nosed dinosaur and sees a lot of himself in the slimey conk!

construction site to venture across. Unfortunately, I managed to get near to the slippery Pebbles within a few minutes.

The simple gameplay will certainly appeal to any young fans of Fred and Barney, especially if they're new to gaming. But what Tiertex, the develop-

ers, seem to have forgotten is that console gamers are generally far better at playing games than computer owners – because that's all they use their console for.

The graphics are undoubtedly very impressive, but the tune is an uninvective rendition of the old theme and the sound effects are few and far between. A predictable Yabba Dabba Doo is reportedly the only speech, although I can't say I ever heard it.

As a Flintstones fan, I'm a very disappointed dinosaur.

● Damian Butt

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Large, colourful sprites; just like the cartoon.
- ▲ Levels are atmospherically prehistoric.

89

SOUND

- ▼ Incredibly annoying in-game tune.
- ▼ Hardly any spot effects or speech.

40

GAMEPLAY

- ▼ Some bad collision detection.
- ▲ Constantly changing control methods.

75

CHALLENGE

- ▼ Tiny levels won't prove difficult for Pros.
- ▲ Could be ideal for someone's first game.

61

Gorgeous graphics but stunted gameplay and limited longterm appeal for most.

PROSCORE 73

FLINTSTONES



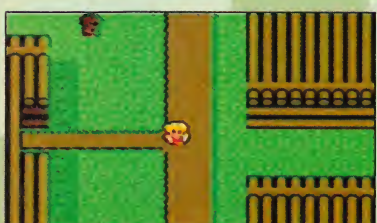
FUNKY HORROR BAND

MEGA CD

Oh no, the Funky Horror Band were on their latest Universal tour when their GigWagon spaceship developed a fault and crash-landed on Earth, scattering their instruments far and wide. It wouldn't be so bad but Earth wasn't even on the itinerary.

The only person who witnessed the disaster was a young girl who immediately rushed to the crash site. On meeting the FHB (in a scene akin to ET - The Extra Terrestrial), she agrees to help them find their instruments so that they can return to their Universal tour.

By some strange coincidence the FHB can also speak Japanese, unlike the poor SEGAPro reviewer, Les, who can't. Japanese RPG fans read on, blasters can turn the page now.



The Mega-CD is the medium that RPGs have been waiting for. The programmers can now go completely over the top with thousands of locations and endless characters. If *Funky Horror Band* is anything to go by, then the RPGs coming out over the next year are going to be something special (yet probably unplayable).

As we have come to expect from Mega-CD games, *Funky Horror Band* has the most amazing intro sequence. It tells the story of the band crashing and befriending this little girl in true cinematic style. The song that plays throughout the intro is a strange mixture of Japanese and English, but it sounds brilliant and it's probably better than half the rubbish in the charts at the moment.

Graphically the main map screen doesn't look all that hot, but the close-ups of the characters as they talk to you are really good. You will come across a lot of characters, some friendly, some arrogant, and some positively aggressive. When you encounter one, the map changes to a face-to-face chat with the person, who then converses at great length to you about their problems and what they need to sort them out. All this speech is taken direct from the CD and sounds great, with real actors adding great expression and vitality to every encounter.

While you wander the massive landscape (although it's not too packed with any detail), a FHB masterpiece pounds in the background. As you progress out of the first town into the forest, the tune changes as befits the surrounding.

The gameplay in *Funky Horror*



As you wander the town, you can pop into any of the buildings to check their contents.

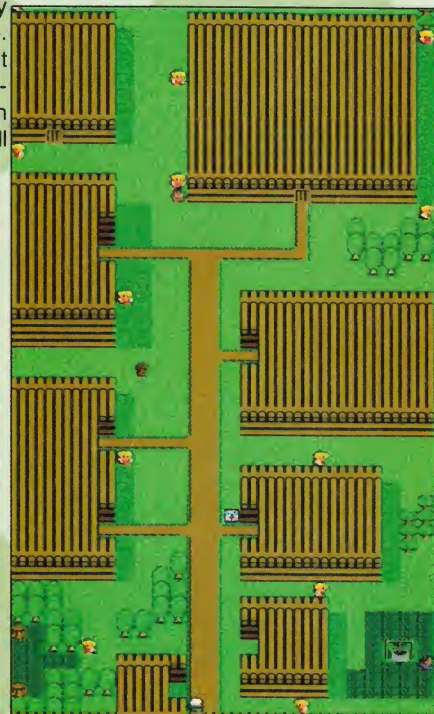


Band is obviously deep, very deep. The one problem is that all the text, of which there is much, is in Japanese.

Unless you are entirely fluent in the language then there is absolutely no point in getting this game. (This is one game that you won't be finding in the Game Over section for a while.) As many an importer around the country will

be saying, nice game shame about the language. We can only hope that Sega will release an official UK version later in the year.

● Les "luvs RPGs" Ellis



Taking a wander around the first town may not seem like an interesting idea but you meet the weirdest people. Some of them will talk to you, some won't, some even give you CD speech!

GRAPHICS	81
▲ The best intro sequence graphics so far.	
▲ Good close-ups on characters.	
SOUND	93
▲ Bop along to loads of songs.	
▲ Excellent use of much varied speech.	
GAMEPLAY	20
▲ Bop along to loads of songs.	
▲ Excellent use of much varied speech.	
CHALLENGE	50
▲ Very tough to learn Japanese.	
▼ The problems are too linear.	

This game is totally unplayable unless you can read Japanese.

PROSCORE 33

PROFILE	FUNKY HORROR BAND	VICTOR	£40	IMPORT
CART SIZE	n/a			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	too many			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	back-up			
		SUPPLIER		
		Console Concepts		
		Unit 18, The Village		
		Newcastle-under-Lyme		
		Staffordshire		
		ST5 1QB		
		(0782) 712759		

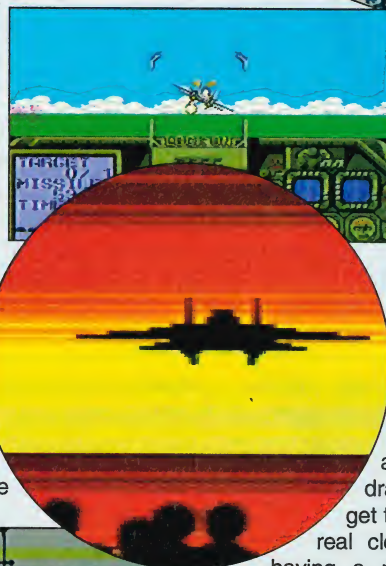
For the uneducated amongst you, G-LOC stands for Loss Of Consciousness due to G-forces. It is possible to experience this during daily life by, for instance, travelling down to London with Andrew Smales, however, usually only pilots experience it. G-LOC will happen, for example, when a pilot pulls an inverted loop at Mach 3, pulling (as they say in the trade) nine Gs. Although this is an incredible pose, it is also very dangerous as you tend to lose control of your arms and legs. Iraqi pilots wouldn't know about this because, a), their planes couldn't go fast enough and, b), they never got off the ground, anyway.

If you can't afford a fighter jet of your own, then you can experience G-LOC by performing either of two simple tasks. Either pop down to your local arcade and jump in Sega's R-360 rotating coin-op, or sit in a chair at home and pull silly faces with your hands while playing Sega's latest master blaster.

G-LOC

If you thought the *Afterburner* syndrome had disappeared with the Eighties, you were wrong. *G-LOC* takes off where

Afterburner crashed and burned. It takes exactly the same format, and suffers from the same lack of depth in the gameplay department. However, the whole game has been super-charged and runs at a terrific rate on the Master System, with the same graphical excellence of the Game



Gear version which came out last year.

With a game that runs as fast as this one does, you would expect screen flicker all over the place. To my surprise, I didn't come across any, even on the massive aircraft that you encounter. The enemy planes and tanks are well drawn and if you ever get the chance to take a real close look – without having a missile inserted up

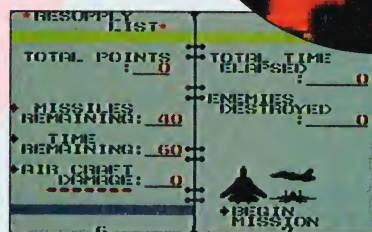
constantly super-sonic.

The music keeps the whole thing going at top speed as it pounds away in the background pushing you to go faster and faster. Effects are just limited to explosions, but what more can you expect on a blatant blast-'em-up like this?

My only gripe with *G-LOC* is that you don't always feel in total control of what's happening. This is probably because the game zooms along at such a rate that you get left behind. However, most of the time is just spent firing without aiming and swirling around out of control trying to avoid incoming missiles. Because you don't have time to stop and look around, you miss most of it!

One of the best bits of combat comes when the enemy gets a lock-

G-LOC came flying into our offices from RAF KC's Computer and Console Magic, 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1PY. Contact the telephonic radar tower on (0509) 211799.



Consult your diary to see whether it is worth going up today or not. If you have to go up, it's not that bad. Just fly around, shoot down the odd plane or 20 and then get back in time for your sausage sandwich. Not to mention the glory, the hero worship and the inflated ego problem.

PROFILE

G-LOC	SEGA UK	£29.99	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit		SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	1		Sega UK
STAGES	8		16 Portland Road
SKILL LEVELS	3		London
FEATURES	n/a		W11 4LA
			©(071) 7278070

your tail-pipe – you'll see just how detailed they are. The larger craft are particularly noteworthy, especially the big bomber which requires six well-placed missiles to dispose of it. The landscape is largely plain and boring, but this is no surprise as it keeps the speed

on. The view switches to the back of your plane and you get to watch as you try to shake him off. This increases the panic ten-fold.

Much fun can be had playing *G-LOC*, but don't expect it to require *Phantasy Star* intelligence.

● Les "hot shot" Ellis



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Lots of colour and detail on all the aircraft.
- ▲ Very fast moving graphics with no flicker.

88

SOUND

- ▲ In-game music encourages action.
- ▲ Believable effects for explosions.

81

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ The battlecraft are a real saving feature.
- ▼ Can get very repetitive and uninvolved.

79

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Coping with the speed is tough.
- ▲ Eight long and tough stages.

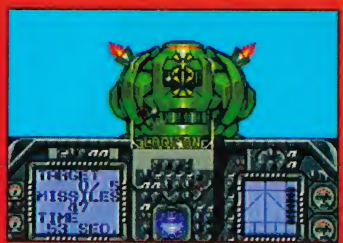
82

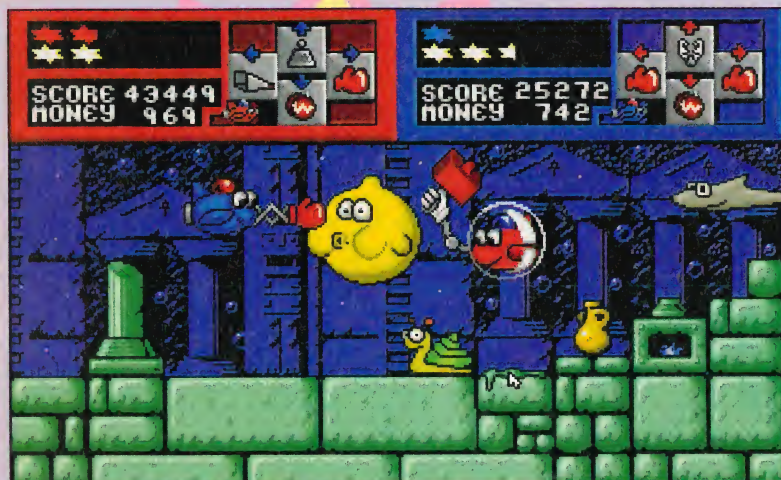
Fun if you like your games fast and furious. A bit simple, though.

PROSCORE 83

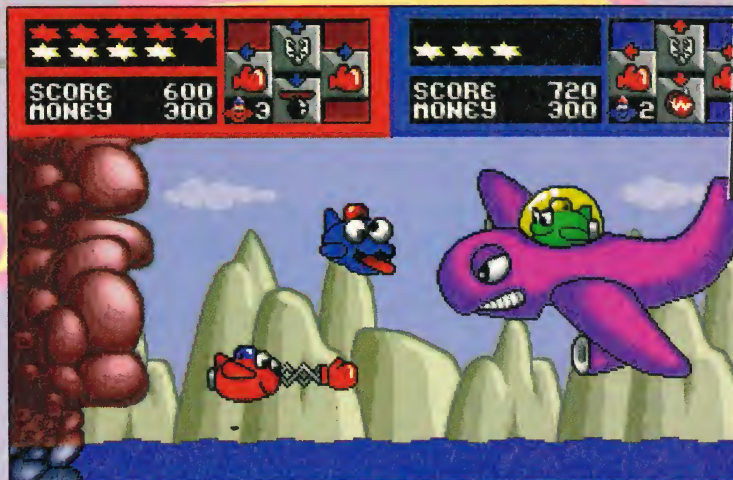
PROTIP

Watch your radar screen at all times. When you see someone get behind you, take evasive manoeuvres before they get a lock on you.





The springy limbs of this savage slinky are just some of the experimental dangers Bop and Bump will encounter on the adventure to find the King's crown. Each level has a characteristic decor and every gadget enemy you come across fits into its surroundings.



Go go gadget boxing glove! Our two dynamic heroes take on the end of level bomber. The trick here is to avoid the rockets he fires and sucker him into lowering his guard. Then smack him in the nose cone. Use as many special weapons as possible to defeat him.



Life's great in the Gadget Kingdom. Or it was until Thump, the "bad boy" gadget, stole the King's gem. As you can imagine, this doesn't happen very often in such a happy kingdom, and therefore the King was understandably distraught! Bop and Bump, our heroes, are summoned for an audience, and ordered to find Thump and retrieve the gem. And so they set off on their fun-packed mission, hunting the nasty Thump down, through the six terrains of the Gadget Kingdom, travelling by air, sea and snow! But beware, for though Gadgetland may seem the jolliest, most pleasant place to be, everybody and everything are out to stop you in your quest!



The idea of buddy-buddy games is not a new one, but *Gadget Twins* is quite possibly the single most original game of this genre. You take control of one of two small aeroplane-like beings, and must find, and trash, a third member of your species before exhausting all of your lives!

The greatest thing about *Gadget Twins* is the total sick-bucket cuteness of the game! The coders have really overdosed on cute 'n' cuddly, resulting in an effect that is, happily, not "nice" cute, but "hilarious" cute!

The clarity of the graphics is no less than astounding! The bright primary colours have been splashed all over throughout the game, so remember to don your SEGA PRO shades before playing, or you could suffer temporary blindness

PROTIP If you can afford them, then buy either the lead weights or the hammer from the shop. They are the two most effective weapons at your disposal - and they're also the most fun!



(Top) Bop and Bump have traded in their wings for an aqualung and go deep beneath the sea to crush the decapitating sea crab. You must be careful as the crab tries to squash them with its armoured shell or cleave them in half with its pincers. The shop (above) is full of useful weapons.

from the radiance emanating from your TV screen! The sprites are big-eyed, smiling dudes with a friendly attitude. From each of the compass directions, they can attack with a variety of humungous weapons. Starting with four minuscule boxing gloves, these can be upgraded to maces, lead weights, hammers, man-traps, and even a power hoover! These may seem mighty tools for the job, but considering the huge variety and size variation in the bad guys, they're gonna be like pea shooters against

godzilla!

Thump sits atop the mechanic level guardians (two per level!), controlling their deadly movements with evil precision. They all have hidden weapons that flash out when you least expect it, and take multiple hits in strategic places before Thump will abandon their defunct carcasses! The smaller foes can be punched out relatively easily, and leave coins in their wake which can be accumulated for use in the shop. They come in all shapes, sizes and colours, and

GADGET TWINS



The green enemies come thick and fast on the rocky level three, but your trusty boxing glove will take on any challengers. Incidentally, the huge pink monument behind was inspired by the famous Les Ellis quote "I suppose a rock's out of the question?"



Yodelaaaahoooo! It's level five and if you can dodge the spinning Julie Andrews then the quest is nearly over. The vivid settings are very similar to *Super Fantasy Zone* but luckily *Gadget Twins* has far more depth and its quirky humour will having you playing again and again.



By CARL WADE
Bop and Bump are saluted as they return the King's crown in time for tea.



The Magic Gem is missing....
comprise the rather blood-thirsty natural fauna of the land.

The six levels all have different tunes to accompany play, and have been well-thought out to tie in with

the onscreen action, in a moist-and-fluffy kinda way. Effects number many, and all are as wacky as you'd expect, with bonks, boofs and bash-es galore!

There are plenty of bonus rooms, warp tunnels and shortcut detours in *Gadgetland*, but these must be sought out from their camouflaged niches. It's well worth finding them though, if you really want to progress, as it's far easier than completely traversing each level.

Bop and Bump can compete as

friends or enemies. This opens up several new avenues of approaching the game. Choose to help each other through the levels, or to waste each other as soon as is gadgetly possible! In friendly mode, your weapons are ineffective against your pal, but in non-team mode, they're lethal. When a gadget bites the bullet, he leaves behind all of his power-ups, so a crafty partner can increase his arsenal by graverobbing his sibling (boo! hiss!).

Gadget Twins is a superb one-

player game, but really comes into its own when two players team up! It's vaguely reminiscent of a superb Amiga shoot-'em-up called *Blood Money*, but takes the idea and converts it into a far out, wild 'n' wacky adventure into the smileadelic zone!

● James "Gizmo!" Scullion

PROFILE	GADGET TWINS	IMAGITEC	£37	OUT NOV
	CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER	
	PLAYERS	2	Gametek Inc	
	STAGES	6	2999 NE 191 Street	
	SKILL LEVELS	1	Suite 800	
	FEATURES	teampay/vs	N Miami Beach, Florida FL 33180, USA (0101305) 9353995	

GRAPHICS	94
▲ Clear, colourful, cute 'n' cuddly!	
▲ Highly addictive throughout.	
SOUND	89
▲ Quality music flow in well.	
▲ Cartoon FX add to the fun.	
GAMEPLAY	92
▲ Friends or foes? You decide!	
▲ You'll get caught by the scenery.	
CHALLENGE	88
▲ Increasing difficulty curve.	
▲ Guardians are awesomely protected!	
The most hilarious, freaked-out cutesy hammer-'em-up yet!	
PROSCORE	90

GALAXY FORCE II

MEGA DRIVE

The first thing that hits you full in the face are the attractive and colourful graphics on the title screen and the planet selection option.

The options are comprehensive with music and sound tests, difficulty levels and control pad variations. The whole front end of *GFII* prepares you for a game that promises to be action-

machines. Each zone is introduced with a different transporter ferrying you to the drop off, which is a clever and appealing change from the usual. But to find the game's Achilles' heal, you only have to play it.

There is virtually no technique at all. The game is ridiculously easy with each enemy within range automatically targeted and dispatched with one quick burst of fire. Dodging and destroying huge numbers of alien craft is soon tiresome. The simple repetition of planet surface, enemy

A huge enemy force has invaded the five passive worlds of the alliance. At last report, the force had split to destroy the colonies on each planet and establish a forward base to plan the eventual fall of the whole star system.

Each invasion force was uniquely equipped to tackle the terrain and take advantage of the natural camouflage. The battles were over quickly, and there was no further word from the outposts.

Piloting the latest development prototype, you must take on the might of the enemy's armada and one by one destroy their control centres. Hopefully this will scatter their defences and make resistance less daunting. But then again, it could just antagonise them and make life a whole lot worse.

SCART ONLY!

Japanese versions of *Galaxy Force II* will not work on UK Mega Drives. The game has been programmed to run on 60Hz machines, which means that only Japanese Scart machine owners will have the dubious pleasure of *GFII*'s company.

packed and gloriously portrayed. Unfortunately, it's not.

That's not to say that the graphics are not excellent, they are. In places, the game is breathtaking with superb backdrops of pastel-shaded worlds and a large variety of enemy war

PROFILE

GALAXY FORCE II ● CRI ● £36 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 5
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER

Console Concepts
223b Waterloo Road
Cobridge
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire ST6 2HS
☎ (0782) 712759

The current mission you are flying, commander.

The score is calculated from progress, number of ships destroyed and energy remaining.

An energy bonus is given on completion of each stage.



● The shield will protect you from most hits. If depleted, it will zap energy directly from your main energy banks.

● Your energy acts as fuel and a backup shield. Try not to crash into walls or ships and it should last you the level. Energy gets replenished at the beginning of each stage.

● Occasionally a supply shuttle makes it through the barrage to assist you. This one will give you extra shot power.

● Your Heads Up Display (HUD) can save your life. It updates you with ship information and current status.



The variety of drop-off craft in *Galaxy Force II* is impressive and highly original. The graphics too are diverse, fast-moving and often highly detailed. Shame about the gameplay.



fortress and control centre becomes predictable and almost a chore. The difficulty level even on hard is unchallenging, making most levels a walk.

Galaxy Force II is embarrassingly simple and presents no real test to a hardened gamesplayer. With the likes of *ThunderForce III* around, this sad effort pails into insignificance. Stay clear of *Galaxy Force II*.

● Damian Butt

GRAPHICS

▼ Disappointingly simple guardians.
▲ Excellent detail on backdrops and planets.

82

SOUND

▲ A good range of tunes and effects.
▲ Some recognisable speech at last.

70

GAMEPLAY

▼ Auto targeting dilutes action.
▼ Repetitive missions soon lose their sting.

32

CHALLENGE

▼ Not enough levels to satisfy.
▼ Easy to complete and throw away.

36

If you're looking for action and intensity...
...look elsewhere.

PROSCORE 47

GG Aleste is a conversion of the blazing Mega Drive shoot-'em-up released last year. But this ain't no straight port, the latest version has been totally restructured with new levels and more guardians. In short, anyone who's played the original will hardly recognise the game. Even the manual shows that a great amount of time has been spent on this conversion, with the pages packed with colourful screens and informative tables.

To aid you, there are various power-ups that bestow you with the expected awesome powers. With these legendary tools of Armageddon, the enemy fortresses are sure to crumble. Go forth and give them a napalm enema...



After reaching level three I was already well hooked with the fast action and incredible weapons of this hot conversion. The graphics are generally of a high standard and knock the brilliant *Halley Wars* out of the stadium. What really made me open my eyes and get some serious playing in, was the sequences between, during and after the levels. Many shoot-'em-ups just stick the ship in a new climate and expect you to believe that a baking desert is a stone's throw away from the arctic. *GG Aleste* consigns all previous attempts to the bin. Whether it's the well detailed demo or the ingenious continuity scenes showing, for example, the ship revving up and shooting off into the distance, *GG Aleste* is consistently surprising.

As with the original, the weapons are different and vastly powerful. I was

PROTIP Use the cartridges from the flying canisters to become invulnerable for a short time. This means if a bullet is about to kill you, pick one up and shoot through it to escape. Remember that green bullets can be shot but orange ones are indestructible.



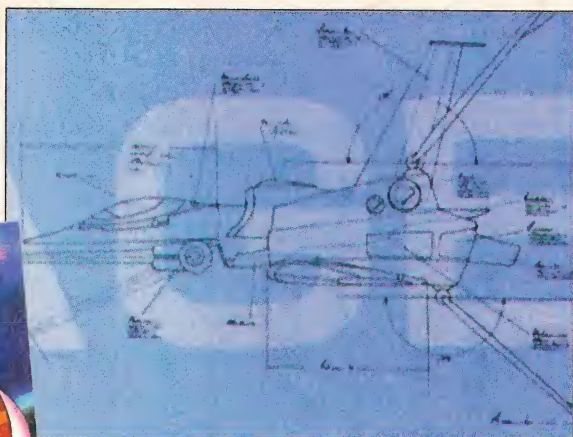
also impressed by the enemies' attack patterns: seldom did they follow the well trodden paths, but new and dangerous routes. To finish you off, all the guardians are well drawn and more often than not change into three or four incarnations before they finally explode.

My only niggle is that it may not be challenging enough for real Pros. It does have eight levels crammed with action, but play slows down slightly when many sprites enter the screen.

Amidst all this violence, you may not even hear the vibrant soundtrack that plays throughout, but cranking the volume up to full really enhances the experience. Unfortunately, the laser sounded like a hyper active grass hopper.

Pips *Halley Wars* to being the best shoot-'em-up on the GG.

● Damian Butt



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Original guardians and backgrounds.
- ▲ Colourful weapons and explosions

94

SOUND

- ▲ What every GG should sound like.
- ▲ Explosions defy all explanation

89

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Easy to pick up.
- ▲ Weapon select is painless

92

CHALLENGE

- ▲ More levels than most.
- ▼ But ultimately easy to complete

75

If you liked *Halley Wars* then *GG Aleste* is an essential purchase.

PROSCORE 89

GALVANIC GUNNER ALESTE



GALVANIC GUNNING



(L)aser – Deadly effective against stationary lines of enemy and guardians but no good in a crowd.



(H)oming – Best when powered up, but still leaves blind spots.



(W)ave – Riot control. When your neck deep in aliens you don't want anything else.



(D)efence Fire – Don't get stuck with this sad excuse.



(N)apalm Runner – A messy business but does the job on gun emplacements.



(M)ag Spread – Can be fairly effective but needs power-ups.

PROFILE

GG ALESTE ● COMPILE ● £24 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE	2Mbit
PLAYERS	1
STAGES	8
SKILL LEVELS	2
FEATURES	n/a

SUPPLIER

KC's Computers & Console
Magic
3 High Street
Loughborough
Leicestershire LE11 1PY
©(0509) 211799

If you've been on the moon or something for the last couple of years, a game called *Golden Axe* may have failed to grab your attention. *Golden Axe* is, undoubtedly, the first great arcade slash-'em-up on the Mega Drive. The original console version (which went on to spawn two versions for the Master System and one for the GG) was based almost pixel for pixel on the Sega arcade machine of the same name.

Ever since a sequel was hinted at in early 1991, blood-thirsty Sega owners have eagerly awaited its arrival. But initial reports from Japan indicated that the sequel may be little more than a graphical rehash of the original. But who are we to believe the words of a few Japs? The three intrepid warriors are back, and look better than ever. Will the playability have the same improvements?



With a name as big as *Golden Axe*, the programmers had two options. They could either take a risk and revamp the original game and take it in an entirely different direction, or they could take the first game and tweak it enough to warrant releasing it as a different game. With Sega desperately trying to get this out for Christmas 1991, it seems quite obvi-

ous what option was chosen.

All your usual options are here – energy level, skill level, magic type, etc – with the added chance to listen to any of the 16 tunes and 35 sound effects before you play the game. Then you (and a second player, if wanted) choose from any of the three characters – Ax-Battler, Tyris-Flare and Gilius-Thunderhead – who reprise their roles with great gusto. In fact, even their adversary is similar,

now called Dark Guld and raring to release upon you the same bunch of degenerates that Death Adder used in the first game.

Into the game you get a severe case of déjà vu as the same old scenery appears to scroll onto screen. Only the lava level, out of seven stages, seems to introduce any sense of originality into the game; here you travel through something that looks like a scene out of

GOLDEN



The tiresome threesome are back in action as we say hello once again to (from the left) Gilius-Thunderhead, Ax-Battler and Tyris-Flare. In the previous *Golden Axe*, they defeat the lord Death-Adder and saved the world from a fate worse than Nintendo. Now you must help them overcome the unwelcome approaches of Dark Guld, a most unsavoury character if ever there was one. In the picture below, you can see the three waiting to be picked. Up to two players can enter the action at the same time, so your only problem is deciding who to leave behind. Give Ax-Battler the push because his magic's hopeless and his special moves are boring.



Left: You are at the end of level four and struggling with Tyris-Flare, the warrior woman, against a very tough pink guy with no head. Come on, get up. Are you a man or a mouse?

Although *Golden Axe II* is coming out in the UK through the international conglomerate known as Sega, we reviewed the American version which was released in mid-December. We got our US version of *Golden Axe II* from Console Concepts for the blood-thirsty price of £38. You can get hacked and slashed, too, by contacting them at The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759.

GOLDEN AXE II ● SEGA ● £39.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 7
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER
Sega Europe
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
©(071) 7278070



PRO TIP When there is a ledge onscreen, make use of it. When your enemy has his back to the edge, charge him and push him over. Or stand next to it yourself and when they charge you, move out of the way and watch them run over into the abyss.

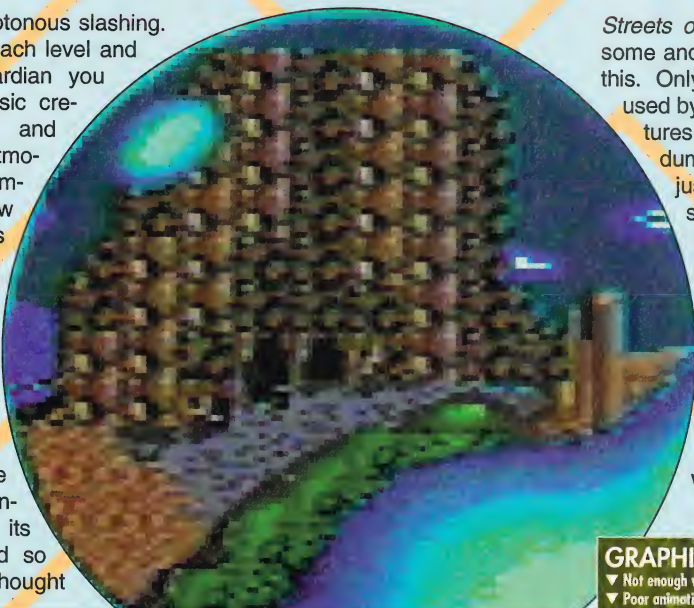


EN AXE II



relief from the monotonous slashing. There's a ditty for each level and one for every guardian you encounter. The music creates a daunting and doom-laden atmosphere, and is accompanied by just a few effects, like swords swiping and painful groans.

While the original got away with some simple game play (although it was considered very involving at the time), the sequel cannot hide behind its graphics and sound so easily. If you thought



Streets of Rage soon became tiresome and repetitive, you should see this. Only four or five moves are used by each player, and the creatures you encounter are so dumb you could quite easily just get away with a simple slash attack all through the game.

By all means purchase *Golden Axe II* if you haven't got the original – it's a *bit* bigger and a *bit* better – but certainly don't waste your money on bot, you'll soon complete this. You have been warned!

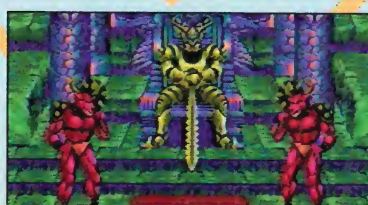
● Les "slice-'n'-dice-man" Ellis

Jason and the Argonauts, complete with fighting skeletons.

But the samey backgrounds could have been jollied up by some diversifying sprites, and although these are initially visually impressive they are spoiled by atrocious animation. It's not that the graphics are worse than the original, it's just that they don't show a big enough improvement to warrant buying both games.

The many tunes that play throughout the game do bring some sort of

AFTER THE BATTLE IN THE
RAVAGED VILLAGE, WE DECIDED TO
START FOR THE ANCIENT RUINS



GRAPHICS

- ▼ Not enough variation from the original.
- ▼ Poor animation on the sprites.

79

SOUND

- ▲ Every one of the 16 tunes is decent.
- ▼ Not enough effects for a gruesome slasher.

84

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ The hacking and slashing never fails to excite.
- ▼ Very repetitive; not enough moves.

80

CHALLENGE

- ▼ Only seven short levels.
- ▼ Fans of the original will finish it with ease.

72

If ever there was a poor sequel produced to cash in on the original, this is it.

PROSCORE 76

The last of the Turbo Manoeuvre Ceptors, Granada has been seen by very few living people. The bane of warring nations world-wide, it appears only in times of conflict. Having no particular philosophy other than halting the fighting, paradoxically it does this by wiping out all of the protagonists.

Some have called it "God of the African Continent", others "the Ghost of Long-Dead Soldiers", but whatever its real name, all know of its destructive capabilities. Even the mothers of bad young boys warn them to behave with the threat of a visit from Granada.

Dormant for aeons, it is again stirring. News of a far-off battle has reached its cybernetic audio-sensors, in the form of a plea from a young girl, fearing for the annihilation of her planet. She is subsequently taken captive, so now Granada must halt the fighting, then rescue her from the warmongers' space-station!



Granada is coming out officially now, but has been available on import for well over a year. Those purveyors of polished and pucker software at Kingbit Games supplied us with our Japanese review copy. Because the game is so old, they are selling *Granada* for just £25 – well worth the money. Kingbit Games are now based at The James Thin Building, 57 George Street, Edinburgh EH1 2DA. Tel: (031) 2257682.

Being a violently-vehement pacifist myself (having to beat it into people the fact that I'm non-aggressive), *Granada* really appeals to me. Killing in the name of peace, what higher motive can one have?

The first thing to hit you is a static shot of the fabled Granada. Looking like a kill-dozer, the Granada is equipped with tracks for covering uneven ground. Its armoury is extensive: the unit has a massive forward cannon, and hidden underneath, a charged-up blaster that should take out most enemies with one shot!

You view the post-Apocalyptic from above in a weird forced 3-D perspective. Disused tower blocks litter the area, and provide a maze-like hindrance to Granada's progress. The colouring is all techno-metallic, with sporadic patches of scorched-grassland. In the bottom right-hand corner of the screen is an extremely useful radar, showing your position and relative displacement of the nasty-generators that you must destroy before proceeding.



Bad guys come in several varieties, the smallest being very similar in size and shape to you, although they are shaded brown as opposed to your metallic silver. These are very intelligent, and once on your tail will follow till destroyed. Their shots aren't too accurate though, and a couple of laser blasts puts them to rest. Next come the X-tanks; these are about four times your size and far harder than their miniature brothers. Their armour-plating means that they'll take several shots before succumbing, or a good hit with the blaster.

Both types have but one directive;



PROTIP When you've completed the game, wait till the music finishes and press A. The character then mysteriously falls over.



Around every corner there more tanks waiting to blow you to bits. Keep an eye on your shield (top left) at all times because each variety of enemy can inflict varying damage – and will mercilessly do so!



to stop you destroying the war-machine generators. These are the "breeders" of your opponents and must be shut down before you're over-run and deactivated. To help you in your goody-goody mission are several drones, which travel in close proximity to you, shooting off and destroying anything in the vicinity. They take plenty of bashing before they're killed, and you can use as many as you find, with them flying around on auto-pilot, clearing the way for you.

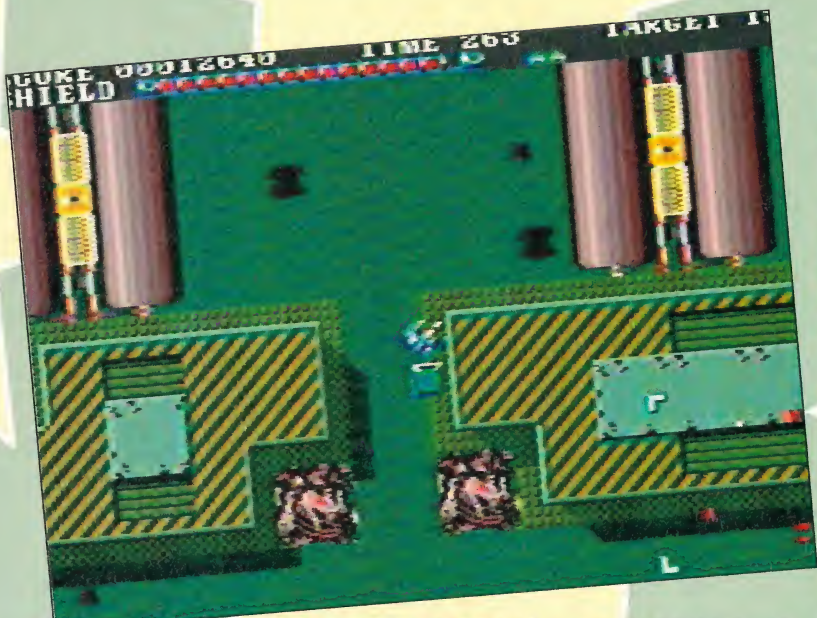
Once the level is clear, you meet

the big bad guardian, and is he big?! A massive floating/bouncing red and blue disc with four legs, he attempts to squash the life from you by landing right on top of you. The only time he's vulnerable is when he lands, so timing is everything!

The in-game noises are excellent. Explosions actually sound explosive and the laser and blaster are both well-hard! The continuous soundtrack is total cyberpunk. Fast and furious, it inspires you to new heights of frenzied destructive insanity, in a similar fashion to the wartime drummers of old that followed the troops into battle, playing all the while.

The Granada is extremely fast and controllable in all eight directions, and will U-turn on a sixpence, making a quick getaway relatively easy. There are several difficulty levels, but

PROFILE	GRANADA	WOLFTEAM	£TBA	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	4Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	4			
SKILL LEVELS	4			
FEATURES	n/a			
				SUPPLIER
				Sega UK
				16 Portland Road
				London
				W11 4LA
				©(071) 7278070



Whatever you do, don't let the enemy tanks run you into a corner. If this does happen, spin the joystick wildly while blasting madly – and God help you!

tion skills, or you'll send Granada up blind alleys galore. These aren't shown on the radar, thus adding to the difficulty, and making the game more than just a simple blast-'em-up, requiring a modicum of thought to complete.

● James "Nemesis" Scullion



stay on the easier ones to start with, as they're hard enough as it is!

The huge maze-like scenario proves to be a challenge. Accessing several parts of the play-area needs excellent naviga-



GRAPHICS	82
▲ Clear, well-defined scenery and sprites.	
▲ Wicked explosions add to realism.	
SOUND	81
▲ Electronic body music for your pleasure.	
▲ Bang! Crash! Splat! Excellent clarity!	
GAMEPLAY	84
▲ Original, smooth, fast-moving fun.	
▲ Well configured joystick controls.	
CHALLENGE	84
▲ Intelligent bad guys zero in fast!	
▲ Spartan life-count adds to difficulty.	
Granada is still a tremendously addictive shoot-'em-up.	
PROSCORE	83

X-GranadaX



Mega add-ons means massive firepower for the pilot of the Advanced Busterhawk space plane. The pods spinning around you can be defined to follow any of five patterns.



MEGA DRIVE

The evil Empire is once again encroaching on the Federation's spatial limits. Under the evil Emperor's orders, his complete Starfleet has camped itself just within the borders of the null-space zone.

You are Captain Grey Lancer, commander of the Advanced Busterhawk, fastest and most lethal ship in the known universe! Unfortunately, that may not be enough to vanquish your foes, as they are now in possession of the Sun Snuffer – a weapon so powerful that it is capable of destroying entire solar systems in one fell swoop.

It's up to you, Grey, to defeat the Empire, making sure that they don't use the Snuffer before you destroy it. Our hopes go with you, Grey! Briefing ends! (Better brush up on your George Lucas films for background info.)

Grey Lancer has one of the most professional front ends I've ever had the privilege of watching. The sheer amount of high-gloss stills and animations that comprise the storyline are a wonder to behold. Coupled with these is one of the most militaristic marching-into-battle tunes I've ever heard, setting the mood perfectly for the hostilities which surely must follow. Once past these, though, the surprises continue. The options screen is crammed with utilities, including the obligatory sound test, but also several ship configuration modes (enough to make your head spin!).

Once you've waded through the options, and hit the game proper, there's no time to rest! The Busterhawk moves like lightning, even with the throttle turned right down to one!

The technicolour high-res backdrops really flash past, and the huge variety of aliens speedily home in on you with uncanny intelligence!

These gruesome flesh-metal fusions come in all shapes and sizes, and range from kamikaze micro-machines to quarter screen scrolling abattoirs!

Luckily, there are several power-ups to be had (although still not enough!), and the bolt-on drones are a magnificent addition to your arsenal too. These can be separately



GREY LANCER

AVAILABLE IN



JAPAN

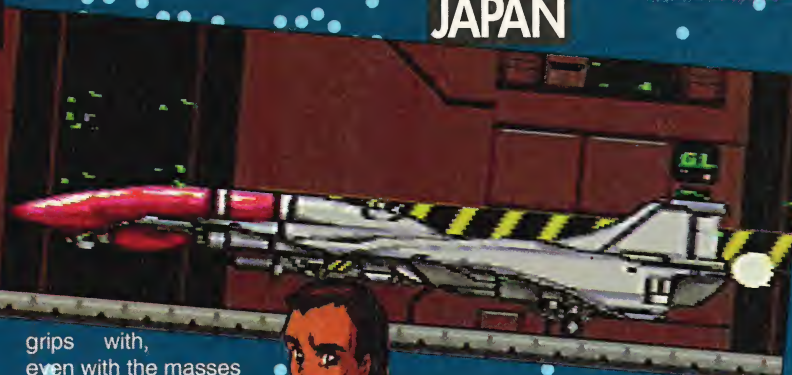
pro REVIEW



configured to circle you in over five different patterns, and provide coverage over areas which would normally be totally vulnerable.

The music is absolutely superlative! For a shoot-em-up, these are exactly the kind of hard, driving, up-tempo tunes that are essential to the plot. The sound FX are also stunning, and include masses of sampled speech. This comes in the form of messages from your home base back at the Federation, and includes such gems as "WARNING! Fragments are approaching!"

Grey Lancer is extremely easy to get to



grips with, even with the masses of possible configurations! Saying this, though, the levels are extremely hard, including level one. You'll use up several lives,



PRO TIP



The first level guardian is a cinch. Just blow his waving arms away, then concentrate

on the body - he's history!

even credits maybe, learning the wave patterns. Add to this the highly-detailed (if not cluttered) backdrops, which have but one purpose - to confuse you - and you've got a classy horizontal scrolling blaster that stands up well against any seen so far!

● James "Gley Lancer" Scullion



"Hey, come on in and check out my controls." The whole of Grey Lancer is packed with gorgeous visuals that enhance the atmosphere of what is basically another Jap shoot-em-up.

GRAPHICS	87
▲ Ultra-fast scrolling!	
▲ Wicked cartoon intro!	
SOUND	92
▲ Speed-track tracks all the way!	
▲ Oodles of sampled speech!	
GAMEPLAY	86
▲ Plenty of options to tweak	
▲ Quality control method.	
CHALLENGE	89
▲ Difficulty rises as you progress.	
▼ Guardians seem a little easy.	
Top-notch shooter that just gets better the more you play it!	88
PROSCORE	

PROFILE

GREY LANCER ● NCS ● £35 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 11
SKILL LEVELS 4
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER

Skytek Software
10 Elizabeth Place
St Helier
Jersey
(0534) 56212

LANCER

If spinning a high performance Ferrari through a series of stunt manoeuvres and then testing its acceleration to the limit on a tortuous race track gets you hot then *Hard Drivin'* is for you. Tengen's MD conversion of the Atari Games coin-op appeared over a year ago in Japan, and now the British public are finally allowed to play it.

Your mission, Jim, should you choose to accept it, is to clock up a winning lap time around a track and then challenge the all-powerful Photon Phantom to a no-holds-barred stunt track race. Watch out, though, one crash means instant disqualification. Your carefree motoring is hampered by many other racers swerving all over the roads and generally causing havoc. If you are lucky, you may even witness a modern miracle: a ten-ton truck performing the loop the loop!

When it first appeared in the arcades, I played *Hard Drivin'* to death, mainly because it simulated real life driving conditions and at the time I was learning to drive myself. The obvious attraction was to ram the gears and screech around corners without invalidating your insurance policy. Now Tengen have created the ultimate driving experience on the Mega Drive and once again, I am hooked.

The graphics are identical to the coin-op, with the traditional flying cars and translucent bridges present – and I am glad to report that this is definitely the best incarnation yet. The car responds convincingly with excel-

PROFILE

HARD DRIVIN' ● Tengen ● £34.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 2
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a

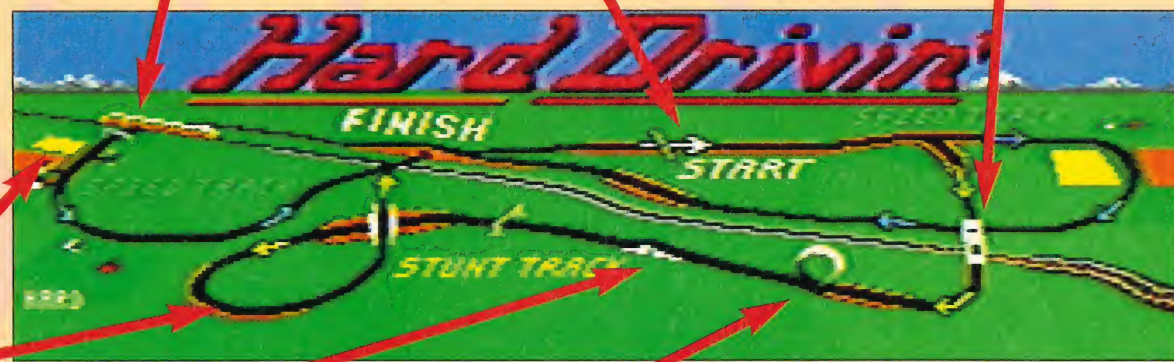
SUPPLIER

Domark
Ferry House
51-57 Lacy Road
Putney
London SW15 1PR
(081) 7802222

making this a well-presented package. I was also pleased to see the mooing cow that you could run over for a bit of sadist fun.

Hard Drivin' would be a superb game if it wasn't for the fact that there isn't much to see or do. Once the courses have been completed in unbeatable times, the novelty wears off. Even the chal-

Hard Drivin' that actually improves on the original idea with innovative features such as a more involved track with many obstacles and different time trials. Varying weather conditions may also improve the action with slippery roads affecting cornering and stopping distances. One other point I will make is that beating the Phantom is actually easier than racing normally because all the



Clockwise from above:
Stunt Curve, Petrol Station,
Checkpoint, Starting Grid,
Suspension Bridge, Stunt Loop,
Stunt Ramp.

lent screeches and glass-smashing effects that really jar the senses. All the original features, such as the replay and course map, are included

lunge with the Phantom loses its sting when you can thrash him by ten seconds, and trying to beat yourself soon becomes a fruitless exercise.

I would like to see a sequel to

moving hazards (cars) are removed so you only have to worry about the track. Call me a bluff old traditionalist but this hardly seems logical. All I can say is, let's hope *Race Drivin'* will be converted soon – more tracks, more stunts, more cars...

● Damian "Metro 6R4" Butt

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Smooth, shaded 3-D landscapes.
- ▼ At high speed, the race can be jerky.

83

SOUND

- ▲ Racing title tune and smashing effects.
- ▼ Only lame engine growls during play.

74

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Great fun creating the most exotic crash.
- ▼ Joypad is hard to control at 210kph.

80

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Can be quite tough for a novice speed freak.
- ▼ Once you're the champ, you soon lose interest.

71

A perfect conversion, with its only flaw being the lack of content.

PROSCORE 81

Hard Drivin'

If you thought the ED-209 robots in RoboCop were tough, you should see these guys. Heavy Nova pits justice machine against havoc robots in a gratuitous display of violence.

You are the ultimate law enforcement unit and, after extensive training against combat drones TROL, GARO and ZAM, you are thrown into duty for the United World Defence Forces. Rampaging droids have taken over a star-base and are ransacking its technology for their own twisted ends.

The name of the game is dirty moves; throw fairness out of the airlock and get those elbows in. You will need to employ such hostile moves as the jump kick, back drop and hammer knuckle to get the edge. Remember, it's all or nothing and failure means being recycled into a Fiat Panda.

What has happened to originality these days? This is the third game to come from Japan where mean creatures (in this case, robots) clash in a one-on-one fight to the death. Basically, this is *Fighting Masters* on CD and even the transformation from beast to metal has not improved on the formula. Being on CD, the intro is, of course, amazing, with filmic panning shots and beautifully shaded graphics. The detail on the main robot is especially gratifying and I am glad to see some

interesting camera angles being utilised for dramatic affect.

Options are as comprehensive as you would expect, but the chance of skipping right to the last stage seems to defeat the object of playing it. As you progress from one opponent to the next, the gameplay does vary slightly from horizontal to eight-way scrolling, but this alone does not stop the game from becoming monotonous very quickly.

The title music is appalling, with a squeaky female singer who has obviously never heard of being in tune. It is also cut short just as she's giving it the full volume. I came to the conclusion that the Mega-CD

More strength, more cunning but lacking in sheer courage our hero opts for the flying away option (wimp).

couldn't stand the noise either.

The opponents and central sprite are smoothly animated but a little too slow to

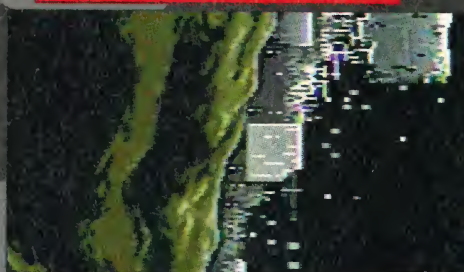
respond, and turning around in the heat of the fight is a nightmare. As a result, when you get hit repeatedly, it is almost impossible to escape the punches.

Worst of all, the death sequence is a real wimp out: all you get is a few measly sparks and a pathetic multi-coloured light.

Heavy Nova has terrible music, average graphics and disappointing gameplay. However can they justify this for a Mega-CD release?

● Damian "Metal Mickey" Butt

PROTIP The most useful item to find if you are to win all your fights is the level-up item. This increases your skill and opens up a whole new avenue of moves like missile and shoulder tackle.



PROFILE

HEAVY NOVA ● MICRONET ● £45 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE	n/a	SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	2	ICE
STAGES	8	17 Doncaster Road
SKILL LEVELS	3	Goldthorpe
FEATURES	teampay	Rotherham
		SB6 9HG

HEAVY NOVA

GRAPHICS	80
▲ Intro sequence is atmospheric.	
▲ Great detail on all sprites.	
SOUND	52
▼ Terrible title tune.	
▼ No fighting effects.	
GAMEPLAY	70
▼ Soon gets frustrating and boring.	
▼ Can be hard to control.	
CHALLENGE	67
▲ Difficulty is set high.	
▼ But too few levels.	
Nothing here justifies it being on Mega-CD.	
PROSCORE	69



The queen of darkness has begun reviving the evil dragons all over the land of Krynn and is creating an evil race called the Draconians. If she controls the world of Krynn, she can force her way into this dimension and start some serious grief.

The only threat to her plans comes in the form of a party known as the Companions of the Lance (they aren't heroes yet...). This band of hardy adventurers plans to enter the ruins of Xak Tsaroth and recover the Disks of Mishakal guarded by the Black Dragon. With their knowledge, the true healing power of Krynn can be restored. These sacred Disks will also enable the party to confront the Dark Queen herself in a pitched battle between good and evil.

HEROES OF THE LANCE

The main disadvantage to *Heroes* is the repetition; every level requires you to wander, web a creature, search for traps and then wander a bit more, turning when you can in an effort to get your bearings. Obviously map-making will add to the game's

PROTIP



There are no Uzi 9mms here, so if it moves, web it – especially the Draconians who delight in sapping your strength with their dark magic.

challenge, but I doubt many players will stay with it that long, unless they are extremely keen *Heroes* fans.

● Damian Butt



You will be amazed by the intro sequences and in-game graphics of *Heroes of the Lance*. The title screen is one of the best I've seen on any Sega, let alone the not-so-humble MS. Each character is depicted at the beginning with a colourful and detailed study that shows just what the MS really can do. The graphics in the actual game are also excellent, and very similar to its 8-bit counterparts. US Gold have certainly made the most of the rare 4Mbit MS cart.

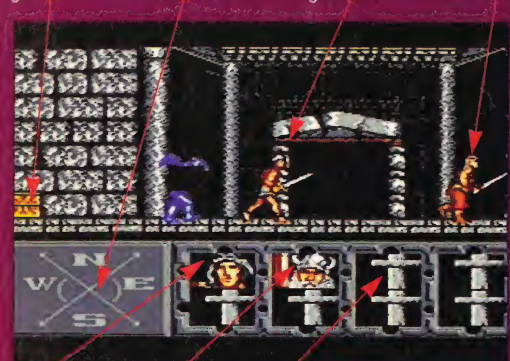
Tromp, tromp, tromp. Excitement abounds in anything but this game.

PROFILE

HEROES...	US GOLD	£34.99	OUT DEC
CART SIZE	4Mbit		
PLAYERS	1		
STAGES	5		
SKILL LEVELS	1		
FEATURES	n/a		
		SUPPLIER	
		US Gold	
		Unit 2/3 Holford Way	
		Holford	
		Birmingham	
		B6 7AX	
		(021) 6253366	



Object in this game – a gem
Compass – lit up letters indicate exits
Enemy human fighter
Your current character



Character image
Energy bar
A gravestone depicts the untimely demise of your characters

It is so easy to praise *Heroes* for its graphics and sound but when it comes to the crunch, it's the gameplay and authenticity that count.

Newcomers to the game will find the awkward controls and rather slow (even when running) movement of the characters a complete turn-off. Each member of the party is portrayed in realistic detail, but sadly only one member is visible at any one time. I found this

system ludicrous because only one character could fight each round. When was the last time you stood back and watched your best friend get mauled to death by a hybrid monster without helping him?



The tromp, tromp, tromping of *Heroes of the Lance* turns into an uncontrollable slide as you speed down a ramp towards a city.



GRAPHICS

Not enough opponents to last.
Title screens are amazing.

84

SOUND

Extremely tame tune.
Hardly any FX.

58

GAMEPLAY

Becomes repetitive too quickly.
Hundreds of possible outcomes.

75

CHALLENGE

Levels are too hard and too short.
The basic problems are still difficult.

79

Too detailed and repetitive to be really playable, especially compared to *SpellCaster*.

PROSCORE 77

Instead of dressing up and having adventures with his trusty Action Man (with "eagle" eyes) like most young kids, Indiana Jones was partial to cracking the odd whip, wearing weather-beaten leather jackets and leaping off moving trains. With all these adolescent upheavals, it's no wonder he grew up to

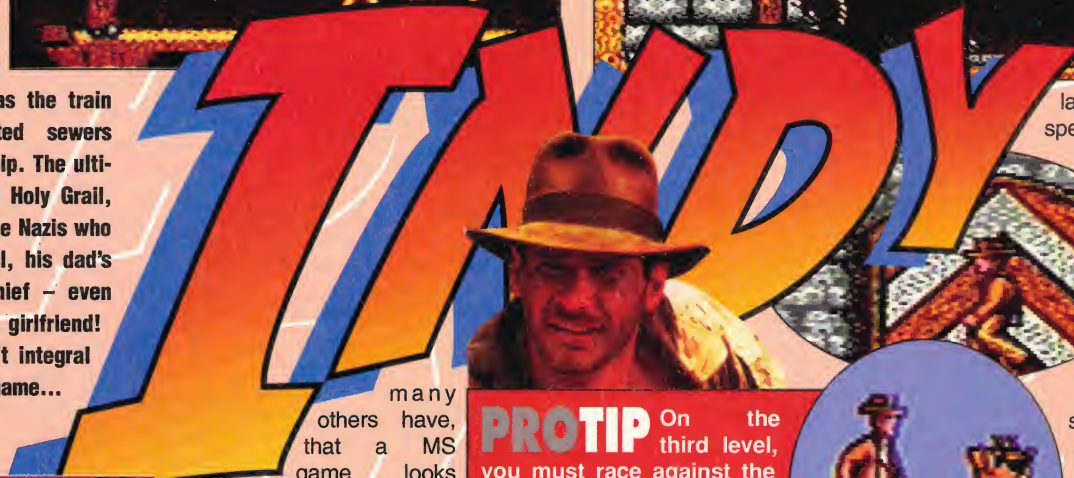
be a heroic archeologist with a dislike for tomb defilers and evil Nazis with duelling scars. The Last Crusade follows the plot of the film closely with all the key action scenes

recreated, such as the train chase, rat-infested sewers and the Nazi airship. The ultimate prize is the Holy Grail, but it isn't only the Nazis who are on Indy's trail, his dad's also up to mischief - even stealing Indy's girlfriend! However, this isn't integral to the plot of the game...

We all knew that GG Indy would be similar to the MS version, but I had hoped that a little originality would make it a treat for patient GG owners. Not so. This pint-sized port shares all the problems encountered on the console version, but gamers may be fooled into thinking it's a better game by the decidedly compact graphics. Tiertex, the programmers, have discovered, as



The first stage of Indy on the GG takes you through underground caverns. Watch your step because as soon as the bad guys appear onscreen you're dead.



many others have, that a MS game looks

hugely different when crammed onto a smaller screen due to it appearing more complex and finely detailed. The fact that the same old playability gremlins crop up is sadly neglected.

As you begin to get engrossed in this epic quest, it is clear that it is much more suited to the GG than the MS even though the latter came first. Apart from the scaled down graphics which give the impression that the play area is significantly

PROTIP On the third level, you must race against the toughest of all the time limits. Learn the route and to save time, drop down the last ladder rather than climbing down. Also, watch out for the dropping rocks especially on the last straight.



larger than it really is, the speed has been improved. Now good old Indy dashes through the levels like nobody's business, and as a consequence the sluggish pace of the MS is eliminated and the game is far more enjoyable.

One major flaw is still present, however, the bad guys are completely lifeless and the collision detection is as appalling as ever. The enemy only has to look at you and you're dead. Before you know what's happening, the game over screen appears and all that's left

is a bad taste in the mouth. The difficulty level is also far too harsh, with the third maze set to an unbelievably hard time limit. Worse of all, the whip has a limited amount of cracks, which is totally unrealistic.

Although improved on the small screen, this conversion is still a major wimp out on behalf of the programmers.

● Damian "Whiplash" Butt

GRAPHICS ▲ Finely detailed with great statics. ▲ Fluid animation on Indy.	82
SOUND ▼ Throwaway tune that irritates. ▼ Dire effects.	42
GAMEPLAY ▲ Fun to get into Indy's boots. ▼ Repetition will take its toll.	73
CHALLENGE ▲ A mammoth challenge for any rogue. ▼ Time limit is too strict.	79
Sadly lacking in "seat of the pants" action.	78
PROSCORE	



PROFILE	INDY 3 ● US GOLD ● £24.99 ● OUT FEB
	CART SIZE 2Mbit
	PLAYERS 1
	STAGES 6
	SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a	SUPPLIER US Gold Unit 2/3 Holford Way Holford Birmingham B6 7AX © (021) 6253366



Many moons ago, Mordamir, your old teacher in the ways of all things magical, was mysteriously taken prisoner in the fabled Labyrinth of Eternity. At the time, some claimed it was the trolls or goblins who caught him unawares, but you've always suspected the dragon.

Now, years later, your practised art has reached great heights, you may even be as powerful as Mordamir. Having surveyed the ruins of Erinoch, destroyed by the dragon's fire ages ago, you resolve to use your talents to rid the world of the dragon once and for all. Who knows, you may even encounter an old friend?

Your seemingly impossible task stretches across a land populated by trolls, goblins and foul abominations that lurk, seething in the darkness. You – and only you – have a chance of success. Will you brave the horrors? Are you immortal?

It is difficult to know where to begin when describing *The Immortal*. One thing is for sure: you have never played a graphic adventure as stunning or as ruthless as this.

The excellent title screen sets the scene for the high quality of game presentation that is to follow. Any preconceptions you have about *The Immortal* based on the computer versions goes straight out the window as the first room unfolds and you are trapped in the Mega Drive world of wizardry.

The graphics on all levels are by far the best I've seen with each room giving off an aura of unpredictability and lingering death. Of special graphical mention are the spectacular fight and death sequences.

EA claim that there are (currently) 18 ways to slay an enemy. A few of them are shown in graphic detail throughout this review, but there are many more to delight all blood-thirsty adventurers. For instance, you can slice an opponent clean in half, watching his entrails spill onto the slab, or perhaps chop the top off a troll's head, exposing his brain. Then again, you might just tap a goblin on the head with your staff, causing his head to swell and explode in a



One false step in this room and a huge hungry worm bursts through the floor and tears your soul apart. It's the unexpected that makes *Immortal* so exciting.

shower of blood and bone. Great stuff!

But the gruesome deaths aren't restricted to enemies. Our hero also exits the game in fine style. My favourites are the impaling spikes on level four and the spectacular demise down the belly of a worm. The main character also walks around the place with aplomb. His staff swings in his arms, the cloak sways from side to side, and his arms stretch out to open doors etc. Probably the best example of the attention to detail and animation is when the

wizard climbs down a ladder. Firstly, the guy turns around, then he puts his staff on the floor, descends the

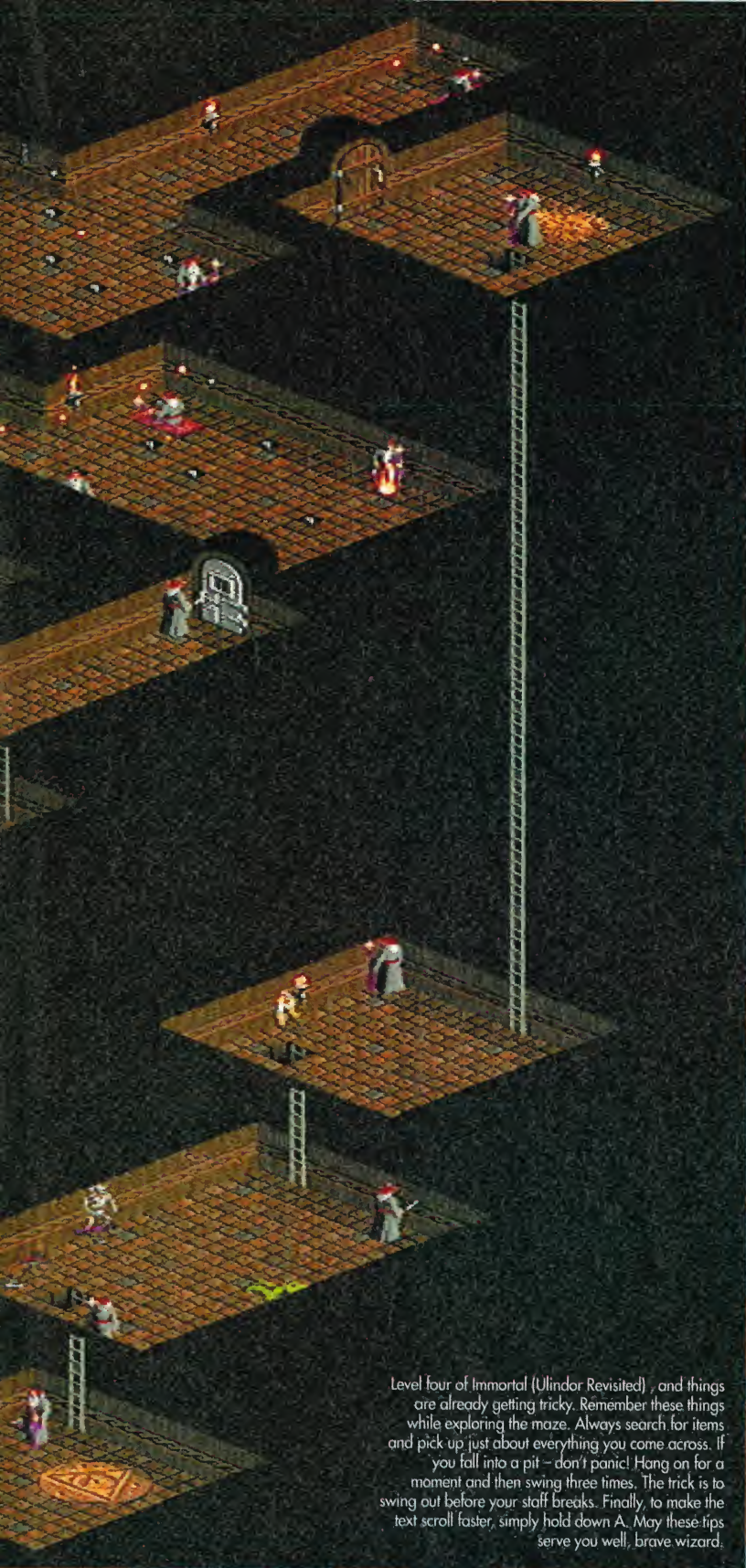
"You can slice an opponent clean in half, watching his entrails spill onto the slab"

PROTALK What a corker *Immortal* is! Blood 'n' guts fans will adore it as will hardened arcade adventurers. I love the way you can chop an enemy in half, blow his brains up or make his skin fall away from his body. Excellent!

Name.....ROBIN WYLES
From.....TROWBRIDGE
Age.....14
Fav game.....SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
Machine owned.....MEGA DRIVE



THE IMM



Level four of Immortal (Ulindor Revisited), and things are already getting tricky. Remember these things while exploring the maze. Always search for items and pick up just about everything you come across. If you fall into a pit – don't panic! Hang on for a moment and then swing three times. The trick is to swing out before your staff breaks. Finally, to make the text scroll faster, simply hold down A. May these tips serve you well, brave wizard.

reaches up for his staff. Polished to the extreme.

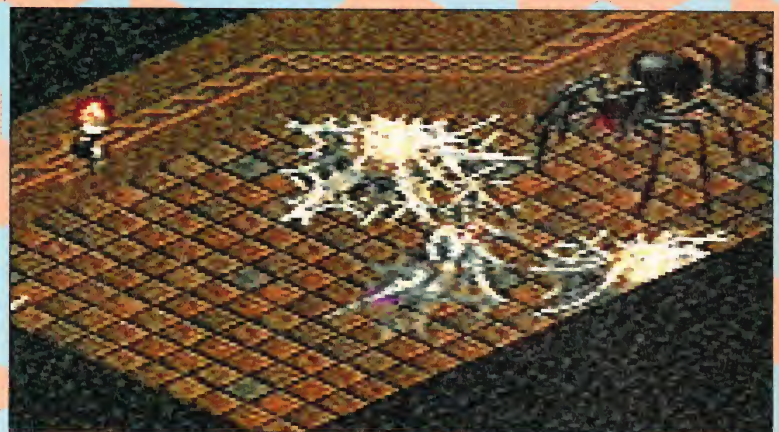
The levels through which you walk are similarly attractive and detailed. The floors all have a great texture and contain various things like compost and hay which have different effects when you pass over them.

PROTIP On level two, you'll meet a dwarf with an attitude. This pint-sized fellow is only too willing to help you – provided you sprinkle him with magic dust.



The amulet reflects a beam of light to hit a gem set in the floor, a deep rumbling is heard and the exit is revealed. The huge chasm that appears is a vent for the dragon's foul breath.

mood. I found the short sequences accompanying certain characters, such as the dwarf who touches a switch and revolves into the wall, and Ana who gives you a kiss and



There are also loads of traps to fall into, so escaping them by swinging on your staff is a skill you should quickly master.

Around the place you will not only encounter pick-ups (all of which have a use) and grumpy guards, but also other characters that are there to help – or hinder if they're not in the

Oh dear, looks like you've been caught in a web and are about to become a succulent meal for a giant black spider. Still, you'll be able to spin a few tales in your afterlife.

escapes, to be incredibly lifelike.

Like the graphics, the sound is excellent with individual tunes for each room indicating mood. For dan-

PROFILE	THE IMMORTAL ● E.A. ● £44.99 ● OUT NOV		
	CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER Electronic Arts Langley Business Centre 11-49 Station Road Langley, nr. Slough Berkshire SL3 8YN ☎ (0753) 549442
	PLAYERS	1	
	STAGES	8	
	SKILL LEVELS	1	
	FEATURES	password	

IMMORTAL



A goblin war council on level five asks you to distract the Nordak creature – do you agree or continue your quest uninterrupted? This is just one of the complicated decisions you will face in *The Immortal*.

PROTIP Try some of our level codes to get further in the game. However, novices be warned, if you don't know what you're doing you'll soon die. Also, level codes vary depending what pick-ups you're carrying.

Level 2: 757FC10006F70
Level 3: 6E1EC21000E10
Level 4: 465FA31001EB0

ger, the music is dark and menacing and for safety it is a light, airy drum beat. Hearty tunes play during scrolling messages and option

screens. There are also some bone-crunching fight accompaniments, with groans and stabbing sounds adding to the experience. The scalping effect has to be heard to be believed.

The sheer wealth of options and possible outcomes in *The Immortal* is incredible. Interaction is the key to

ally of the Goblin King! This is *The Immortal's* strongest asset, it does not follow the well-trodden paths of other graphic RPGs. This is something new and exciting.

Obviously in such a compact review it would be an injustice to even attempt to describe *The Immortal's* many treasures, but



At long last you stand and face the dragon on level eight. With no-where to run, it's just you and him in the final showdown. The blink spells will provide protection, but not for long. One thing's for sure, if you don't find something else, you're toasted.

progression and conversing with friendly vendors and even grateful goblins is not uncommon. Many help you with items or information and there is even a chance to become an

THE DEAD POOL

Fight sequences play a heavy part in your progress through the labyrinth. It is important to hone your skills with the sword quickly, or you'll end up dead meat. There are 18 different ways which will convey your opponent's demise. Here are just a few appetisers. (Is it any wonder EA think WH Smith may not stock the game because of its graphical content?)



Let's rock and roll! The goblin warrior turns to stone and crumbles under the might of your staff's magic.



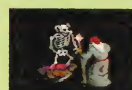
Your short sword slices this goblin clean in two. His two halves slap to the floor in a pile of innards.



The worst of the beheading sequences. Blood spurts into the air in an arc as the body slams into the floor.



As your sword slices his jugulars, the body falls leaving the head suspended for a moment...



One swift stroke and the enemy's skin slides off his bones like a pair of baggy Y-fronts. Charming!



Kerrspat! You smote the beast with your big stick and his brains explode into lots of bloody bits – yuck!

word system.

With eight increasingly challenging levels to test even the bravest of ProWizards, *The Immortal* looks a tough one to crack. Which is just as it should – £45 is a lot of money! Certainly, no-one will find this easy and longtime play and value for money are most definitely guaranteed. I have no reservations in giving this the ProYo!

● Damian (Gandalf) Butt

THE GREAT WIZARD'S BACKPACK

A book of fireballs gives you unlimited missiles for a short time. Ideal for disposing of aerial pests.

The bottle of water revitalises you. In this case it must be drunk soon or the poison in your veins will finish you off.



● The sensor is found on level five. The instrument rises in pitch according to the proximity of the worms under the floor. It will save your life, if you are quick.

● A note gives you many needed clues in this game. This particular one warns of worms and the need to train baby lizards.

each one has had time and an unnerving attention to detail spent on it that are sadly lacking from most others of this genre.

My only complaint is the difficulty. Anyone who does not share the writer Will Harvey's fiendish logic may find themselves quickly stumped.

PROTIP

Try not to step on the pressure plates in the arrow room. These are what sets off the traps.



Some of puzzles are very obscure (such as the rock becoming a gem when the slime eats it), which doesn't detract from the gameplay, it just tests your patience in the most frustrating way. Luckily, Will has generously included an intelligent pass-

GRAPHICS

▲ Detailed, intricate and amazingly atmospheric.
▲ Glorious techn-o-gore for the fight sequences..

96

SOUND

▲ Moody tunes play for different situations.
▲ Bone-splitting effects during fights.

93

GAMEPLAY

▼ Fights take a while to master.
▲ Levels vary in length.

89

CHALLENGE

▼ Difficulty is very high; most puzzles obscure.
▲ Formidable dungeons present tough challenge.

94

If you only buy one game this year, buy *The Immortal*. Give your Mega Drive a treat.

PROSCORE 94

CONSOLE XS... SO MUCH BIGGER AND BETTER THAN THE REST!

For the very latest hints, tips and complete playing solutions for all the top Sega and Nintendo games, plug into CONSOLE XS.

No other magazine gives you 160 power packed pages crammed with full game maps, massive solutions and exclusive game busters.

CONSOLE XS is the only magazine aimed at games playing winners. It provides you with the techniques and tactics to win at all the major games.

There's nothing else like it...



ISSUE 4 ON SALE FROM NOVEMBER 10th AT ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS!

He's back. The fish with the death wish, top secret agent James Pond, returns to the Mega Drive in his second adventure, and seeing as we must have already used all the bad fish jokes in the preview last issue, you're safe from them this issue.

The evil Dr Maybe has come up with his most devious plan yet. He has infiltrated the factories run by Santa Claus and has made all the toy's faces sad. It has been left to F.I.S.H., the Underwater Intelligence Agency, to go in and rectify the problem – and rescue Christmas from disaster.

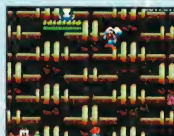
F.I.S.H. send in their best agent, James Pond. The only problem is that being a fish James has a slight problem with breathing on land. To combat this, he is equipped with an armoured "iron gill" that enables him to breathe out of water. So take a deep breath and prepare to save Christmas.

PROTIP If you are stuck and can't find a way down to the exit, try to stretch out your neck. There may be a platform out of sight that you can use to climb over an obstacle.



If you like your action a little wacky, then this could be the game for you. Right from the title screen, with the penguins skidding all over the place, you get the feeling that the programmers are a few penguins short of a six pack. Then into the game – wow! The graphics are jaw-droppingly good. Stunning is the only way to describe them; they certainly make a change from the simplified presentation of *James Pond*.

You start off outside a huge castle (and I mean HUGE!) with Pondy waddling around looking for a way in. Go through one of the doors and you will enter a

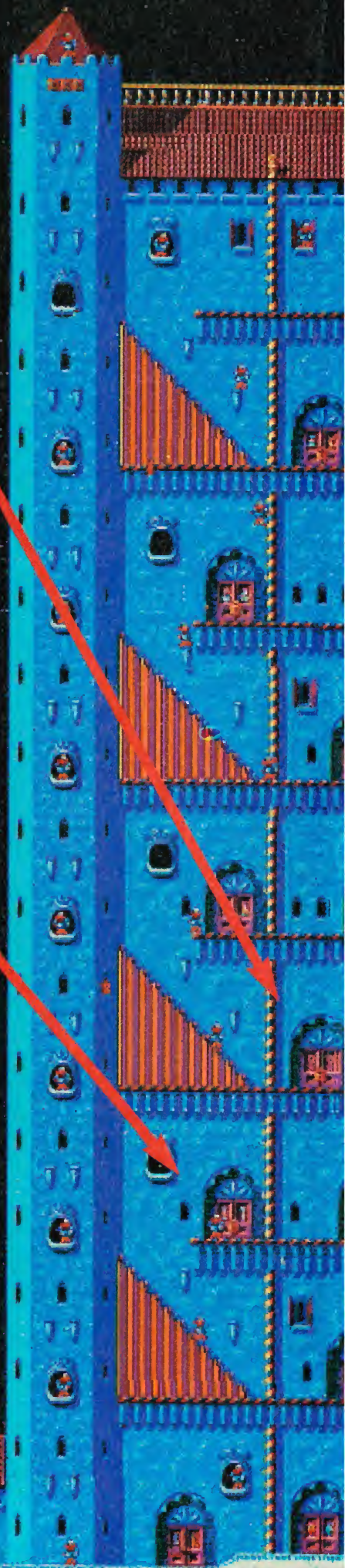


weird and wacky world occupied by giant teddy bears and a whole host of other freaky characters.

There are at least ten levels, with the added incentive of some completely hidden stages. Each level consists of around three sections, plus the obligatory guardian. But these big guys aren't like your normal aliens, no, these guys are colourful, cute and almost too friendly to kill – almost. But don't worry, with three continues you're likely to get a good sample of the levels during your first session.

The superb graphics, created by Chris Sorrell (*James Pond's* original designer), aren't limited to the guardians though, for the whole game shows a level of quality as yet unseen on the Mega

SEGA
pro
YO!



JAMES POND II

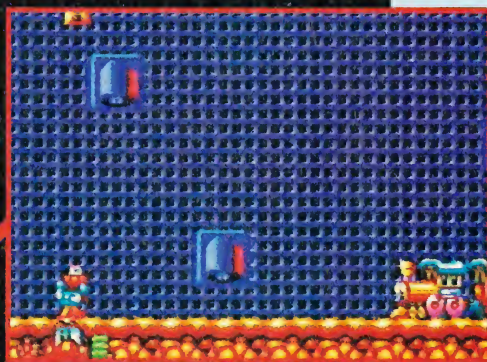
CODENAME ROBOCOD



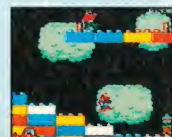
Drive – yes, even better than *Sonic*. James, of course, is the star of the show. He has many different poses, with the cutest effect being when he runs; his whole body is animated for movement, not just his “legs”.

Each level of the game is based in a different toy factory, and the graphical style reflects this. These levels range from Mechanical Toys to Classic Games, from Cuddly Toys to Bathtime. Some of the levels have some pretty zany touches in them. One of my personal faves is on the Bathtime level where you jump in a bath tub and float all over the screen picking up bonuses. Also,

on one of the early levels you hop in a plane (Codcorde, of course) – well, haven't you heard of flying fish?



James must have been hitting some serious Pond juice last night, he's starting to see double. Use the platforms-cum-CD players to help these two to their weight watchers class. The end of legoland is in sight.



PROTIP The first level guardian (a giant teddy bear) can be disposed of quickly using this method. Wait till you see which



side of the screen he comes down on, then jump on the opposite platform and pounce on him. Go to the other side and wait for him to come down and then repeat the technique. Five or six hits will see him destroyed.

regard them as inspired or idiotic, they are undoubtedly original.

Listening to the music that plays all the time is like taking a walk through a fairground. There are always bright, chirpy tunes that sound like they could have been taken straight from one of those old

PROTALK I loved everything about *RoboCod*, from the penguin opening sequence to the enchanted factory with its colourful sweetsies. (Marc Almond, indeed). The way Pondy's fishy bits wiggle all over the place when he runs and his cute flying goggles make this a game bursting with fun and cartoon action. A great Christmas game.

Name.....KATE BURGE
From.....BRADFORD
Age.....18
Fave game.....EA HOCKEY
Machine owned.....MEGA DRIVE



PROFILE

JAMES POND II ● E.A. ● £39.99 ● OUT DEC

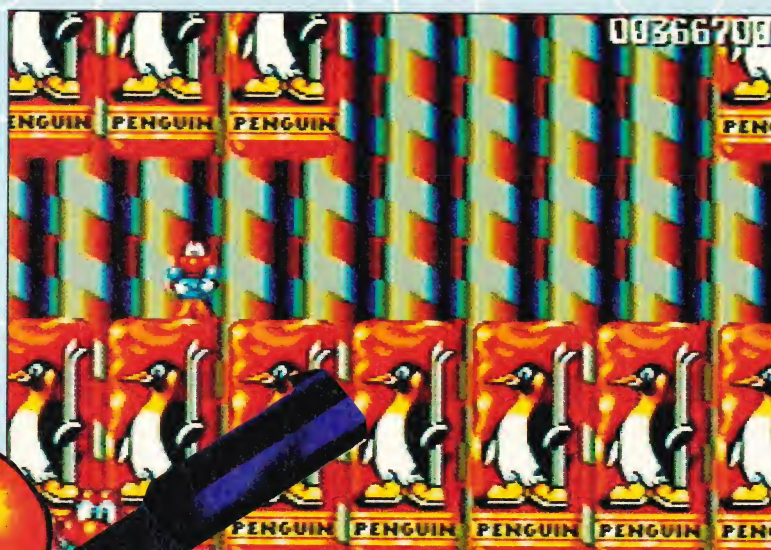
CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 10+
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
Electronic Arts
Langley Business Centre
11-49 Station Road
Langley, Nr Slough
Berkshire SL3 8YN
☎ (0753) 549442

style fairground organs playing in the background. The music was created by EA's prolific Rob Hubbard, although it sounds nothing like we've ever heard from him before.

The actual gameplay is a little simple, but still manages to create enough frustration. All you have to do is jump around collecting objects and then try to reach the exit at the end of the level. The exit is activated by rescuing the poor penguins that are trapped throughout the factories. Because the penguins are often trapped at great heights, James now has the ability to stretch himself to reach those out-of-the-way places. This makes the gameplay very different when combined with the

faults in the gameplay. More importantly, *Pond* is instantly playable and very hard to put down. Some of the levels can prove pretty frustrating but perseverance will always pay off. *Pond II* is visually stunning with



variable jump power.

As far as I can see there are no real

This bit could drive you nuts. Hidden away somewhere in *James Pond II* is this secret room. The only problem is that everything happens to be upside-down. The cod will have to get his skates on to defeat this red herring. He's up to his gills in trouble now. And there's no place to go.

some of the prettiest graphics ever seen on the Mega Drive. With all the tunes and that addictive playability it stands head



After mercilessly having his MX5 trashed (by a rusty blue Ford Transit, reg...) old Monty turns to our hero James who generously offers him the chance to use his motor. "Uh, no thanks, James, I'll stick to the company 2CV thanks."

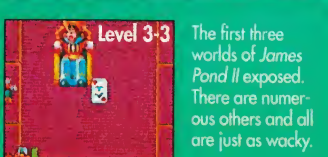
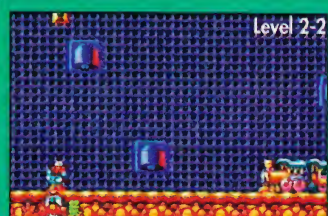
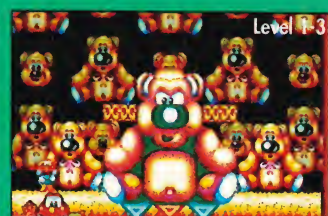
Originally EA were going to promote Penguin chocolate biscuits in the game – it didn't work out, but some of the hangovers remain. This level features a problem: there are three exits and as you will soon discover, they all lead to the same place – back to the start of the level! So now what?

and gills above the rest. And that's no red herring, I can tell you!

Sonic had better look out; his days are numbered. Toyland has a disease, but there's a new guy in town, his name's RoboCod. And he's here to brighten up everyone's Christmas.

● Les "smells fishy" Ellis

GRAPHICS	96
▲ Absolutely amazing, quality stuff.	
▲ Mega-detailed and brightly coloured.	
SOUND	92
▲ Great fairground soundtrack.	
▲ Loads of one-off effects throughout.	
GAMEPLAY	88
▲ Simple but accurate movement.	
▲ Instantly playable, very addictive.	
CHALLENGE	90
▲ Huge levels, and loads of them.	
▲ Later levels are tough but fun.	
Move over Sonic, <i>James Pond II</i> is about to be Christmas number one	
PROSCORE	95



The first three worlds of *James Pond II* exposed. There are numerous others and all are just as wacky.



Jardine the Mad is not the sort of person you would wish your little sister to be going out with. Many moons ago, Jardine invaded your kingdom of Mythgard and all but wiped out its inhabitants. Luckily, the 12 Lords of the Elements came along just in time to save your village. But even the mighty warriors couldn't all stand up to the wrath of Jardine.

While Jardine retreated to reform his dark forces, the four remaining lords combined their powers into a holy blade. When Jardine returned, the four power-drained lords were soon terminated, leaving the blade as your village's only hope. Now you are dispatched to find the blade and use it.

Er, one thing we forgot to mention: Jardine's got the blade...

JEWEL MASTER

Playing *Jewel Master* is like taking a journey through your worst nightmare. Imagine every horrible creature you can, make them ten times worse, and you'll find them in *Jewel Master*.

The monsters throughout the game are a delight to look at; very large and placed on crystal clear backdrops. The detail on everything is astounding, making this one of the

PROFILE

JEWEL MASTER ● SEGA ● £TBA ● OUT NOV

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 5
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER

Sega Europe
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA

© (071) 727 8070



Jewel Master has previously been out in Japan. You can get it by sending off your £31.00 to Console Concepts, 223b Waterloo Road, Cambridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2HS. Tel: (0782) 712759.

PRO TIP On the second level, the first sandworm should be killed as he will give you a magic ring. If the first one doesn't give it to you then the second one will.

best looking walkalongs around. Just wait till you get to the end of the first level and encounter the tiger – you'll be impressed!

The first stage is a cinch to finish, but the trouble soon starts on level two. Walking across the parallaxed sand dunes you will come under attack from all manner of excellent animals; from jumping scorpions to huge sandworms (just like in *Dune*).

There are also cool SFX accompanied by 22 tunes. These range from classics like *Now You're Gone* to the unforgettable *Close to the Edge*.

Jewel Master is a very entertaining package. Despite the repetitive gameplay, it does manage to continu-

ally impressive with graphics and sound making you play and play. One suggestion, though, a password system/level select would have saved a lot of aggro.

● Les Ellis



Meet Bonaparte, the skeleton. When you hit him, the bones will fall away only to reassemble straight away. You will need to hit each bone about four times to permanently destroy them. Then you have to take on the skull.

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Great use of colour and detail on backgrounds.
- ▲ Nightmarish sprites, very well animated.

89

SOUND

- ▲ 22 epic tunes all relevant to the sections.
- ▲ Be wowed by some great gore effects.

92

GAMEPLAY

- ▼ Repetition could soon frustrate.
- ▲ So addictive you just have to try it again.

88

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Very tough to progress on higher levels.
- ▲ Level protectors provide a real test.

87

A very challenging romp through your deepest fantasy nightmares.

PROSCORE 88





If Subbuteo ever came up with a table top version of American football, all you have to do is line the players up and when the whistle blows slam them into each other.

there, the sound and graphics just add to the atmosphere. There are some marvellous close-up graphics displayed when you score a touchdown, but the sound consists of little

"28, 42, 38. Hut! Hut! Hut!" Sorry about that traditional start to an American football review, but good old Joe is a traditional sorta guy. Now "smokin'" Joe Montana has made the final transition any Sega star can make, he is now a big boy on the small screen. For those readers in an area of the UK that still can't receive Channel 4, Joe Montana is the star quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers, one of the top American football teams. So loosen up your throwing arm, hold on tight to your balls and prepare to plot your course through the season to your final goal, the Super Bowl. You can take control of any team you like - although if you're in charge of the Indianapolis Colts, you'll have more chance of finding the Holy Grail than the Super Bowl.

You start with a picture of the main man himself introducing his latest incarnation to sports game-starved Game Gear owners. And the picture of Joe is excellent, putting to shame any Lynx stuff you may have seen. These intricate graphics are used throughout the game and add real polish to what was originally quite a bland game on the Master System.

Strangely, the action is viewed on a horizontally scrolling screen as opposed to the vertical style of Madden and Ditka. The players are

small, yet not swamped by the large grassy area in which the lie. The ultimate test of whether they are big enough comes when you

more than a few whistles and beeps, and a poor title tune.

Okay, so this may be a direct port from the Master System version, but



take control of the players. When the ball is passed back to your quarterback and he starts to move (under your control), you do actually feel that it is you controlling the man, more so than any other footy game. It is this feeling of control that makes Joe Montana Football better than most footy games.

With the superb playability already

GRAPHICS	84
▲ Ace title screen and playbook graphics.	
▲ Compact but realistic animation.	
SOUND	69
▲ Crowd and tackle effects are neat.	
▲ Poor title tune.	
GAMEPLAY	87
▲ Accurate translation with loads of moves.	
▲ Easy to use, fun to play.	
CHALLENGE	86
▲ Skill levels are perfectly pitched.	
▲ It's tough to make it at the top.	
The best - and at present only - American football title for the Game Gear.	
PROSCORE	85

Joe Montana FOOTBALL

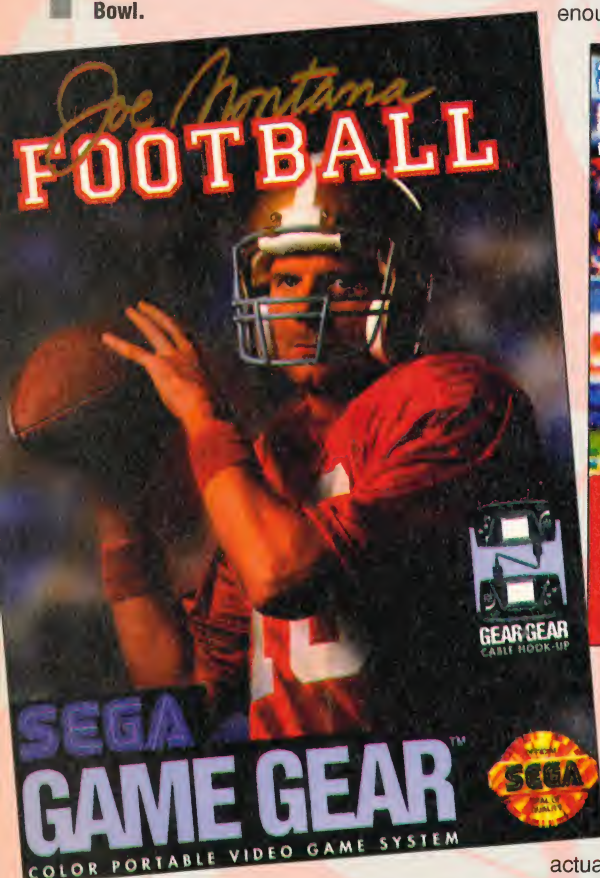
PRO TIP When the playbook is displayed, study the diagram carefully. It will help you realise where all your players will be if you need to change the man you're controlling in a hurry.

ball game and the fits the bill perfectly. (Incidentally, the two-player versus game is great fun if you can afford the lead and two carts.)

● Les "jock strap" Ellis



Study the playbook, or if you can't be bothered just do what Joe tells you to, after all he is supposed to be the expert on these things.



The American version of Joe Montana Football is available under the same name, so if you fancy throwing some touchdown passes you can get hold of this from KC's Computer and Console Magic, 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire. Tel: (0509) 211799. Joe's tutoring fee is just £24.

PROFILE	JOE MONTANA FOOTBALL	SEGA	£24.95	OUT NOW
	CART SIZE	2Mbit		
	PLAYERS	2		
	STAGES	n/a		
	SKILL LEVELS	3		
	FEATURES	link-up		
			SUPPLIER	
			Sega Europe	
			16 Portland Road	
			London	
			W11 4LA	
				© (071) 7278070



Imagine sitting in the commentators' box at a blockbuster Superbowl final. The instant replays flash before you, the director zooms in and out to pick close-ups on the players, while their stats pop up at the end of the quarter. In your headphones, all you can hear is the constant chatter of the enthusiastic TV reporters. The atmosphere is so rich you can smell the chilli dogs.

If you can imagine all that, then you can visualise Sega's sequel to the best-selling Joe Montana Football. Its subtitle, Sports Talk Football, is self-explanatory, but never before has any game had an accurate, speech commentary throughout every minute of the game. The subtitle also suggests that this may be the first in a long series of talking games - let's hope so.

Montana II is certainly well developed in the features department, but can it hope to play against the likes of the mighty Madden '92?



In the wake of John Madden Football '92, Joe Montana II has appeared quite quietly. Figuratively speaking, of course, because this game is about as noisy a game as you're going to get. But the only question remaining to ask is, does the speech try to cover up poor gameplay?

Undoubtedly, Montana II looks great. The title and team select screens could not be more detailed

I usually find American football games follow the same formula, but I'm glad to say this one impressed me with its fresh new outlook. Team selection at the team lockers is original and the Dream Team option is a great idea to build up your star selection.

I also cannot fault the ingenuity of touches such as the graphical scoreboard, zoom mode, and the way the

PRO TIP When playing the computer, watch his selection of plays. You will notice that he chooses his, then you can alter yours accordingly. Using this method you can anticipate his every move and win.



Joe Montana II

SPORTS TALK FOOTBALL



PROFILE	JOE MONTANA II	SEGA	£34.99	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	8Mbit			
PLAYERS	2			
STAGES	n/a			
SKILL LEVELS	3			
FEATURES	versus			
				SUPPLIER
				Sega Europe
				16 Portland Road
				London
				W11 4LA
				0 (071) 7278070

(Above) Here's an interesting "Spot the ball" picture, San Francisco have just executed a shotgun and are pushing to the goaline.

(Left) Touchdown! Two fat supporters throw popcorn and generally celebrate.

is not overly playable.

The selling point is obviously the speech and I have to admit for the first few goes it was excellent and atmospheric. However, after long matches, the novelty wore off - it became so irritating that the switch off option was essential.

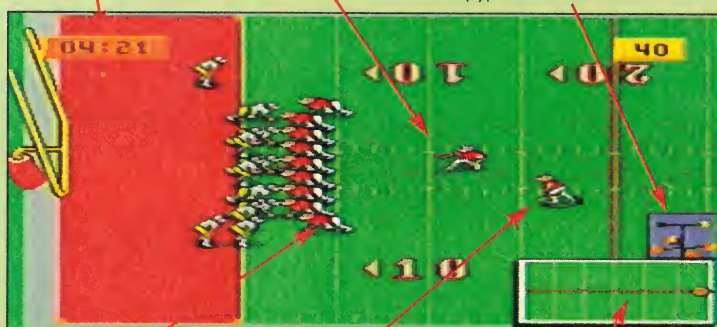
Even though Montana can be amazingly lifelike, with its speech and TV reporters breaking up the monotony, the pitch action just does not give you a feeling of effort or satisfaction. As a result, you quickly become bored with it. With other "greats" on the market, Montana just doesn't score a touchdown with the SEGAPro team.

● Damian "freezer" Butt

This is the time remaining in the quarter.

This player snaps the ball for the kicker.

The angle and strength of the kick can be altered by moving the directions on the joystick and this indicator.



Your line of scrimmage, these valiant guys are all that stops your ruthless computer opponent mashing Joe into the dirt.

The controllable kicker: use him to score field goals and get extra points after touchdowns.

The wind meter shows how strong the headwinds are. A kick in a crosswind could destroy your chances, but it may also swing the balance in your favour.

and the game itself is incredibly well drawn and coloured. I particularly like the weather conditions; playing in the driving rain made the push so much more enjoyable and satisfying.

players are all realistically animated and move in convincing fluid strides and dives. Despite this, it was clear from the moment I actually stepped onto the grid-iron that Joe Montana II

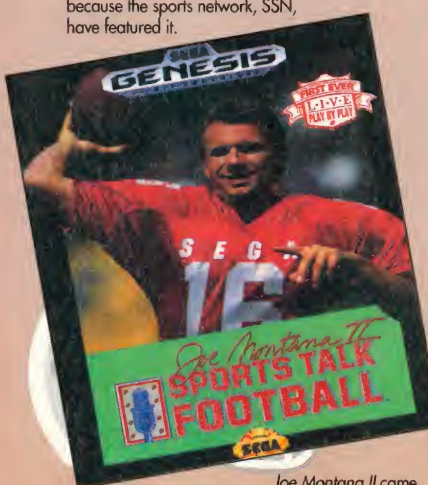


GRAPHICS	90
▲ Massive smooth moving players.	
▲ TV presenter and scoreboard are original.	
SOUND	94
▲ Tune and groans are very realistic.	
▲ Constant commentary is very impressive.	
GAMEPLAY	81
▲ Fascinating to play at first.	
▲ But the action is indistinct and jerky.	
CHALLENGE	84
▲ Loads of opponents to challenge.	
▲ Twoplay becomes repetitive.	
Everything is excellent, but the playability suffers from lack of involvement	
PROSCORE	85

The battleground, each team has to encroach on each other's fifty yards of home territory in a desperate effort to get that magic touchdown.



It must have been a helluva game because the sports network, SSN, have featured it.



Joe Montana II came out in America at the beginning of the month. You can get the US version from Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759.

Two of the most famous basketball players since the Harlem Globetrotters, Michael "Air" Jordan and Larry Bird are firm friends, and highly respective of each other's prowess on-court. They even meet for a one-on-one practices...

Both have their specialties. The Chicago Bulls' Jordan is the king of the aerial shot. His devastating 360s, windmills and other slam-dunk variations make him a real spectator's player. Also known for his speed and aggression, he's possibly the most highly thought-of player in the NBA!

Bird, who plays for Boston's Celtics, is a real tank, but this doesn't mean he's sloppy! He's a quick-thinker, remaining calm while calculating and achieving difficult shots under pressure. At the top for over a decade, he's a shining example to basketball players worldwide!

Now the giants clash in EA's one-on-one spectacular...

Jordan vs Bird is the latest in EA's range of EASN (Electronic Arts Sports Network) software that deals with the major sporting events of the 20th Century, ranging from American football to ice hockey, baseball (later this year!) to basketball.

The fanfare you receive when powering up is almost as glorious as something you'd expect at the Olympics. Joined by several statics of all of today's popular spectator sports, it really sets the stage for the meeting of these two basketball giants!

Next comes the title page, with two rather dodgy, cartoonish stills of the gents in question, and a fast 'n' funky musical accompaniment. Following this is the complex, yet user-friendly options screen.

There are several game types, but the three main ones are one-on-one, Bird's three-point contest, and Jordan's slam-dunk contest.

One-on-one is the main feature, and although packed with features was rather a disappointment as far as I was concerned. Although having

several skill levels and an arcade/simulation toggle option, it just didn't have the realism we've come to expect from EA. The graphics are professional, with the commentators appearing before every match, giving their (valued?) opinions, superimposed over a long-distance digitised shot of the court.

On-court visu-



JORDAN VS BIRD



JORDAN'S DUNKSHOP

Being a master of savoir-faire, Jordan knows how to turn on the crowd! His mid-air mastery is second to none, and here's your opportunity to try out ten of his personal favourite slam-dunks. Their names speak for themselves, and you can guarantee lots of "ooo"s and "ahh"s from the crowd as you rocket that baby home! As Nike say, "Just do it!"





PROFILE

JORDAN VS BIRD ● EA ● £TBA ● IMPORT

CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	4	Electronic Arts
STAGES	3	Langeley Business Centre
SKILL LEVELS	4	11-49 Station Road
FEATURES	n/a	Langeley, Nr Slough
		Berkshire SL3 8YN
		☎ (0753) 549442

als comprise of you looking up-court at the basket, which you both share. It's colourful and well-defined, but sadly lacking in gameplay. Firstly, the joypad is far too crowded with functions, and secondly, the players, although having a wide range of moves, are far too slow-moving and jerky. This really detracts from a potentially massive licence, and in my opinion is a major flaw.

Options in one-on-one include a

PRO TIP On taking a shot, always run for the basket. If the shot is unsuccessful, you'll be in the right position for possession on the rebound.



Bird has the upper hand here, and he knows it! Jordan just isn't happy, and therefore nuts him from behind!

AVAILABLE IN
USA

pro REVIEW



really excite.

Bird's three-point contest is the second offering, and has the best graphics of the three. Up to four players can compete in this test of long-shot accuracy. Bird has a massive sprite, being half the height of the screen, and is really well-animated as he attempts to sink 25

balls in 60 seconds, from five different angles, all from outside the shooting D. This game is relatively simple in that all you have to do is co-ordinate your button-pressing with Bird's movement onscreen. Saying that, though, it's extremely difficult to get all of the balls in as you have a time limit to work within which runs down all too soon!

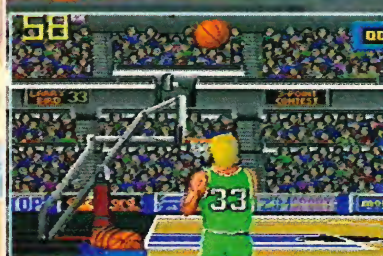
Finally comes my favourite sub-game, Jordan's slam-dunk contest. Choosing from ten of Air's favourite shots, you must attempt to complete three. Again, four players may compete in this display of aerial excellence. Difficulty is high, as a series of three moves per shot must be completed with pin-point accuracy to see that elusive basket! The animation as you twirl through the air is totally different for each shot, and really well-executed. The shots are varied, with such weird names as switcharoo, fly swat and the pumper. It's a real joy to pull off one of these, and the five judges that appear mark you on style, finesse and skill.

As a package, *Jordan vs Bird* may well appeal to hard-core basketball fans, but in my opinion holds no lasting interest to the majority of EA fans. Decent graphics, minimal in-game sound and lack of long-term appeal add up to a rather disappointing affair. A real shame considering the success EA have had with their previous sports outings.

● James "Travelling" Scullion

BIRD DROP-INS

Welcome to Bird's three-point practice round. Your objective is to basket as many balls as possible from five different angles. This must be accomplished in 60 seconds, and that ain't as long as it sounds!



Two seconds gone, and only one ball airborne! But will it go in? If it doesn't you'll lose your bonus!



Alright! Three balls thrown, and three baskets scored! Nice shootin', Tweety-Pie!



We're really lettin' rip now, amigos. Is this guy on form, or what?



These seem to be the easiest shots, as they're straight on, but don't relax, because there's still plenty to do!



16 seconds to go, and eight balls to throw! Seemingly an impossible task, but you can do it, Bird, my man!



No way, José! Four baskets in three seconds is beyond the capability of even you! Practice is definitely recommended!

GRAPHICS	85
▲ Plenty of colourful styles.	
▼ Definition could be better.	
SOUND	79
▲ Nice bouncy intro tune.	
▼ Ref's whistle and little else in-game.	
GAMEPLAY	72
▼ Rather slow-moving and jerky.	
▼ Shallow and lacking in variety.	
CHALLENGE	81
▲ You won't win in professional mode!	
▲ You may not win in recreational either!	
A polished program lacking content to warrant any long-term value.	
PROSCORE	78

KABUKI SOLDIER

Disgusting was the first thought that entered my head as I played Kabuki Soldier. This has nothing to do with the game itself, it was the tasteless flock wallpaper on the options screen that turned my stomach.

But, despite having a choices screen that looks like the inside of an Indian restaurant, and only a few options, Kabuki has many interesting features that may attract beat-'em-up junkies. For a start, the game looks

The dreaded shape-changer demon Vozaku had spent months infiltrating the clan house of Kabuki. The master of the hidden art was asleep when the usurper struck. There was no great battle, no legendary victory or task, the demon simply poked his finger into the back of Lord Ozacki's neck and he fell silent forever.

With the hidden art – the demon's only weakness – gone, it set about ruling the land using dark magic to crumble his enemies to dust. Now Lord Ozacki's finest Ronin have set out to avenge their master and rid the world of Vozaku's reign of terror. The road to the demon's palace is fraught with danger, and his ninjas, sumos and demon half-breeds will try to stop the Ronins.

Only through using the hidden Kabuki art of combat and magic will the avengers live to kick the demon's head in.

PRO TIP On level three, there is a waterfall close to the path. If you push up and enter it, you will be in a room with droplets falling from the ceiling. If you are injured, you will receive units of energy for every droplet that hits you. This will also mean you do not have to deal with the thugs in front of the waterfall.



good. The lands you traverse are exciting and colourful with oriental overtones. The temples, petrified forests and ravines are all convincing

and set the scene for a fighting frenzy similar to Double Dragon.

The way you can pick up an opponent and throw him all over the shop is nothing new (Streets of Rage?) but highly satisfying. Kabuki also adds the additional twist of being able to fling him to the ground and stomp the thug into the dirt. You can also perform a spectacular move resulting in you spinning a sumo around, taking out all in range and then chucking him off a mountain. The music that accompanies this is a terrific thumping

If you fall under a bridge on level three you will enter a secret room. In here you can pick up extra bonuses.

Scrolls – the more you have the more powerful the magic.

A strict time limit.

Dark sumo can perform strangle holds and judo.

Purple sumo – the most deadly, stay away from his grip.

Your energy.

Regular sumo can only do a jump hold.



On the third level, you will enter the mist. This is here to confuse you and hide approaching deviants. Here you are in the hands of a zombie goblin who is trying to pull off your white wig. The time ticks down at the top.



PROFILE

KABUKI SOLDIERS ● **TAITO** ● **£34** ● **IMPORT**

CART SIZE	4Mbit
PLAYERS	2
STAGES	5
SKILL LEVELS	2
FEATURES	teampay

SUPPLIER
Console Concepts
The Village
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1QB
(0782) 712759

the same tired old characters leapt out to meet their maker – you would have thought they would have learnt their lesson by now...

● Damian "snake eyes" Butt

GRAPHICS
▲ Levels are a little unimaginative.
▲ Main character is superbly detailed.

SOUND
▼ Sparse punching noises and no screams!
▲ Great music for each level.

GAMEPLAY
▼ Enemies are not very intelligent.
▲ Masses of violent enjoyment.

CHALLENGE
▼ Not enough levels or difficulty settings.
▲ Initially tough for one player.

Kabuki looks and sounds great, but is ruined by its ease of play.

PROSCORE 73



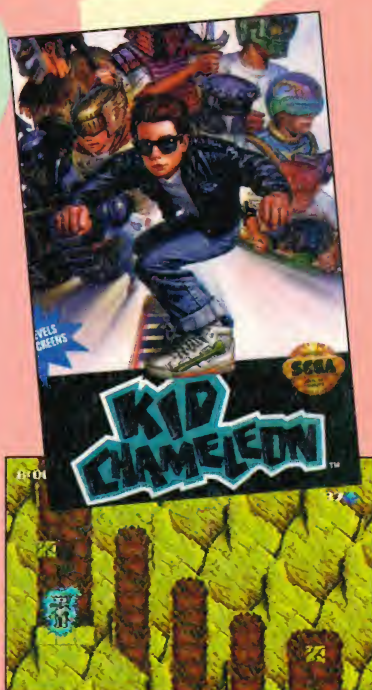


KID CHAMELEON

Wild Side is the latest feature in arcade games; so real you can almost smell the sweat. This particular system, however, has got a little out of hand and the head guardian, Heady Metal, has decided that he has had enough of being beaten by little snotty-nosed kids.

Heady has escaped and is wreaking havoc with all the local kids. He is capturing them so that he can make the poor blighters run the gauntlet of mazes he has within his Elsewhere Evilmeister.

This is where Kid Chameleon comes in. He is the coolest, hippest kid of the lot and is also the world's greatest gamesplayer. Kid has volunteered to find the guardian and take him on at his own game. If he wins, he gets the kids, if he loses the guardian gets the Kid.



Above the Kid is his wall crawling gear, below our Kid goes for simplicity and a nice pair of Ray-Bans.



Kid Chameleon is being touted as the next mega game on the Mega Drive, following in the footsteps of *Sonic* and *RoboCod*.

Graphically, *Kid* is a cross between *DecapAttack*, *Sonic* and Nintendo's *Mario*. The main sprite is your run-of-the-mill T-shirt emblazoned authority-hating kid, a real Dave Perry.

The Kid really develops the attitude when he picks up the chameleon masks that turn him from a normal street dude into an all-singing all-dancing nasty dude. Check him out when he puts on the ice hockey mask and turns into Jason Vorhees.

The backgrounds are nothing really spectacular, but they don't detract from the game. All the action is based in the foreground and that's packed with action.

The backing music that accompanies the play is very bland. It just doesn't jump out like a good tune should, it beeps along in the background while creating very little atmosphere.



The effects are not bad, but their trouble is that you can't hear them because the music drowns them out.

The gameplay in *Kid Chameleon* is the familiar platform-cum-shoot-'em-up. But instead of relying totally on old concepts, the programmers have introduced some clever new elements, the best of which is changing the kid's persona with each different helmet he picks up. Trying out all the different helmets is great fun and some of the effects are quite hysterical.



Sword-wielding samurai Kid hunts for some butts to kick. The Wild Side machine has gone wrong and Kid's got to sort it out.



Kid Chameleon suffers from one main fault, though, and that is too common on all Mega Drive games. Even with 103 stages (according to the manual), it is, of course, far too easy. But so was *Sonic*, and like *Sonic* you'll be coming back to *Kid Chameleon* over and over again because of its very addictive gameplay.

● Les "big head" Ellis



GRAPHICS

- ▲ The kid looks cool whatever he's wearing.
- ▲ Varied levels and enemy sprites.

90

SOUND

- ▲ Good effects, but they are too quiet.
- ▼ The game music is a little bland.

83

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ A great combination of game styles.
- ▲ The helmets add real variety.

95

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Huge levels.
- ▼ But they are far too easy to complete.

89

Sonic should keep looking over his shoulder, the Kid is on his back.

PROSCORE 89

PROFILE

KID CHAMELEON ● SEGA ● £36 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 4Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 103
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
Console Concepts
The Village
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1QB
(0782) 712759

Ghost City is Les's kind of place. It only appears every 13 years, it is located somewhere between life and death, and is inhabited by dark-hearted creatures who detest all things beautiful.

These animals feed on the souls of good people, like 10-year-old Katherine. But, boy, did they pick on the wrong chick this time. Katherine is a girl with an attitude problem. She doesn't like the idea of having her soul stolen, so she has called on her friend (if you'll be her friend) to come and rescue her.

Armed only with your .357 Magnum Light Phaser you must protect Kathy as she walks through the haunted areas.

LASER GHOST



With this kind of black scenario how could *Laser Ghost* fail to impress me?

The whole game is very slickly presented, from the neat title screen, through the excellent story sequence with the pages of a book turning over, to the separate static pictures between each of the seven levels.

The in-game graphics are also top-notch. The backgrounds are packed with things to shoot, and the sprites that you encounter are beautifully coloured and animated. In fact, the standard of detail is close to *Donald Duck*, but being a Phaser game (with the option of joypad if you haven't got

a light gun) the collision detection is a bit wayward.

Within the MS's major sound limitations, *Laser Ghost* has done well to

PRO TIP



When passing open doorways, keep the sights near the top of Kathy's head as bats and other flying creatures will attack as soon as she walks by. When they appear, you don't have to move the sights far to blast them and save Kathy's energy.

muster up some horror music to play during the game. Just turn the lights off while you're playing, and you soon get the atmosphere you're looking for. The sound effects, though, are disappointing, consisting only of about four sounds.

Phaser gun games normally suffer from being completely unplayable, even if you use a joypad, but this one is a real joy to play with either controller.

Ultimately, *Laser Ghost* is a little easy. I can't see it lasting any longer than a couple of days at the most, but for younger Phaser owners this is definitely worth considering.

● Les "phased" Ellis



Waltzing through the woods poor Kathy finds a cherry, in fact she gets attacked by loads of them. To the right she walks through a haunted house and gets attacked by chairs and pictures.



GRAPHICS

▲ Very atmospheric, doom and gloom.
▲ Some of the weirdest creatures ever.

90

SOUND

▲ Eerie tune haunts you to the end.
▼ The few spot effects are poor.

82

GAMEPLAY

▲ Stacks of fun as you blast away.
▼ Soon gets repetitive

79

CHALLENGE

▼ Levels are too short.
▼ Very easy to complete

70

A refreshing approach to a shoot-'em-up – although a bit simple.

PROSCORE

PROFILE

LASER GHOST ● SEGA ● £29.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 2Mbit

PLAYERS 1

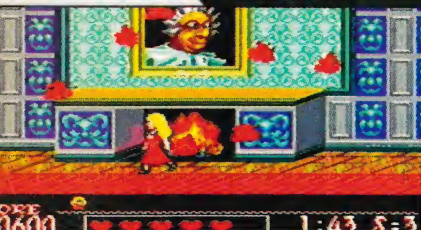
STAGES 7

SKILL LEVELS 1

FEATURES Phaser

SUPPLIER

Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
©(071) 7278070



notice how Sega kindly put a picture of fat publisher Monteiro the wall. This is the level guardian in the haunted house.

LINE OF FIRE

An itchy trigger finger is the key to success in this game. As you've probably already realised, this game isn't going to feature much adventure strategy. No, just violence mixed in with a not-very-subtle blend of even more violence.

After the impressive title logo

This may all sound fairly simple, but *Line of Fire's* playability is helped by variety. The different crafts, and their unique handling characteristics, help this immensely, and along with the ramps to cliffs and other landscape quirks, add real depth to the gameplay.

While you're running around, a simple tune plays in the background.

The few sound effects are a bit better, though. The bullets fly off with a rattle and your rockets smash into the enemy with a nice crunch and a bang.

The old shoot-'em-up format is still going strong on the MS, and this has given a new lease of life to the genre.

● Les "the sprat" Ellis



Airwolf was never like this. This is a particularly nasty base because it doesn't know when it is beaten. Shoot out all the guns and you'll see what I mean.

scrolling across full screen, you get into a very manic game. The backgrounds are a little plain, but this is probably just as well because the foreground action is intense. All the action takes the same view as *Commando*, except you're never actually on foot, you're always controlling either a jeep, boat or plane. Firing from these large units has to be very accurate as the enemy soldiers are tiny, in fact too small on occasion.

GRAPHICS	79
▲ Fine looking guardians and long levels.	
▼ Some of the sprites are too small.	
SOUND	67
▲ Good effects, but needs more of them.	
▼ Simplistic tune plays throughout.	
GAMEPLAY	79
▲ No subtleties here, just a good blast.	
▼ No two-player mode.	
CHALLENGE	85
▲ Six long levels packed with challenge.	
▲ Progressively difficult.	

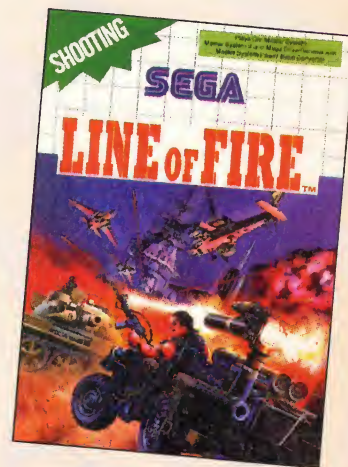
Continuing the high-quality trend of recent MS releases.
PROSCORE 82

PROTIP One little trick to learn straight away is how to guide your rockets into an enemy when you're nowhere near him. If you are on one side of the screen and an enemy appears, fire two or three rockets and then straight away move across the screen; your rockets will follow you across the screen.

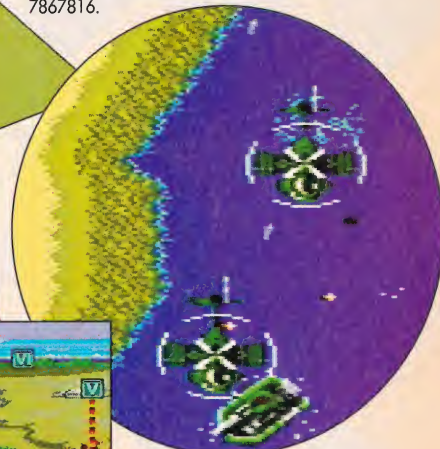


Jack certainly isn't a dull boy. In his quest to make Rambo look like Larry the Lamb, Jack has infiltrated a top secret enemy base (which isn't that secret after all if Jack has found it) and stolen a new secret weapon (which he knew about before he broke in so it wasn't that secret).

Now Jack, in an attempt to emulate his long long cousin Jack the Ripper, must run the gauntlet of enemy soldiers and weaponry to make it back to his home base. Luckily he has hidden some boats and helicopters under some nearby bushes to help him, so things should be weighted in his favour. Don't you just love it when a plan comes together...



Our thanks to TV Games for burning this cart to us for review. If you want to get it from them, contact Jase the Lad at TV Games, 11 Castle Parade, Ewell By-Pass, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2PR. Tel: (081) 7867816.



This map will guide you from the jungle to safety, with just the odd stop for a bit of violence and carnage. All in a day's work for a tough guy like you.

PROFILE	LINE OF FIRE	SEGA	£32.99	OUT NOW
	CART SIZE	2Mbit	SUPPLIER	Sega UK
	PLAYERS	1		16 Portland Road
	STAGES	6		London
	SKILL LEVELS	3		W11 4LA
	FEATURES	n/a		©(071) 7278070





THE LUCKY DIME

STARRING Donald



Donald Duck is fast turning into the next cartoon superhero of console games. First there was Mickey, but a mouse running around saving people was just too far-fetched. Things didn't get much better with Sonic, a blinking hedgehog indeed. But now a duck. Yeah, *really* plausible.

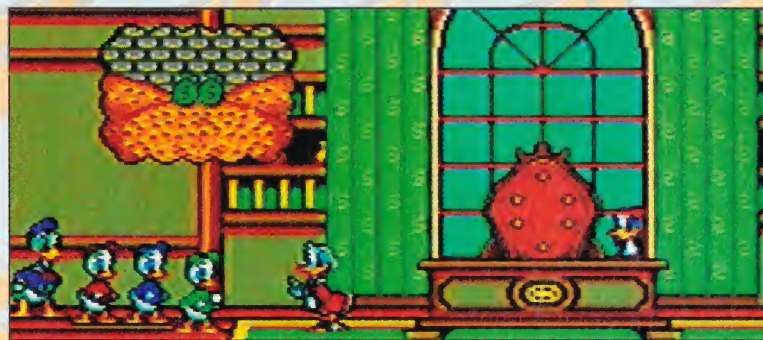
Donald's wayward nephews, Huey, Dwee and Louie, have gone and got themselves kidnapped again, and just guess who has to go and get them? Armed with mallet and sausage sandwich (and Paxo), Donald has to go and stuff the bad guys. Personally, I would leave the little sods there. Perhaps it would teach them a lesson, and stop them getting into such stupid situations and thus causing Sega to write another game around them.



After seeing MS *Sonic* a few months ago, I thought nothing could ever give me such a fun challenge again. How wrong a poor reviewer can be. The game starts with a great intro that goes on for ages and explains the predicament of Donald's nephews. The whole intro sequence is gloriously coloured, making the game just as inviting as the Mega Drive version.

PRO TIP

To kill the lion level guardian you will have to time your move carefully. The trick is to jump on his head and avoid the speed-blurred body. Stand on the edge of the centre platform and wait till he comes over, then jump up. If you have a mallet left, swing it while you are in the air for extra hit points.



Being a Disney game, and having to get Disney approval one would assume, the animation during the game is some of the best ever seen on an 8-bit console. Donald is obviously the best of the lot (just leave him alone for a few minutes and he will start pulling all sorts of faces at

you!), but all the other characters in the game show what a totally polished product this really is. It just seems a great shame that Sega couldn't produce this sort of game two years ago. If they had, then the Master System would be a massive seller the world over, not just in

Europe.

Unlike the graphics, the music in *The Lucky Dime Caper* doesn't jump out and grab you. It is one of those tunes that just seems to drone on and on and not go anywhere. The sound effects are disappointing, too, even to the degree that you will find yourself reaching for the volume control.

The gameplay, on the whole, is similar to *Mickey Mouse* in that you have to jump and hit things most of the time. However, all the levels are extremely packed with many different elements. You'll need to possess quite a variety of gaming skill to



If you have ducked out of buying *The Lucky Dime Adventure* in your normal Sega stockist then try KC's Computer and Console Magic, 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1PY. Tel: (0509)211799. It's where we got our version from, and the price is really weird, just £31.49!

PROFILE

DONALD DUCK ● SEGA ● £32.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 7
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
(071) 7278070

GRAPHICS

- ▲ How much better can MS graphics get?
- ▲ Superb cartoon quality animation

SOUND

- ▲ Variety of tunes and effects.
- ▼ Some of them are very dull.

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Dead easy to pick up and play.
- ▼ Can drive you quackers with frustration

CHALLENGE

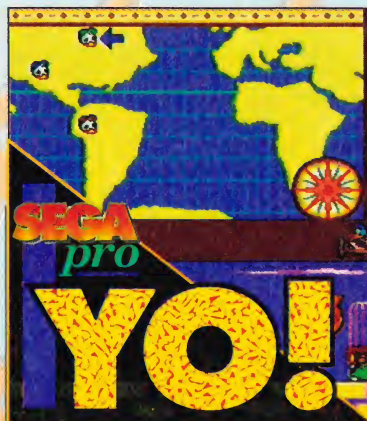
- ▲ Very long segmented levels.
- ▲ Like Mickey, this is a tough cookie.

94

If you've got a Master System, get the *Lucky Dime Caper*. End of story.

PROSCORE

94



ME CAPER Duck

cross all the obstacles as every level requires a combination of strategies. But the levels guide you along in the right direction, so beginners and experienced players alike should find the game very challenging.



The levels of *The Lucky Dime Caper* are the longest on the Master System, and certainly the most varied. Here you can see Donald swimming underwater (above), having a chat with Huey – one of his three kidnapped nephews – bouncing over the head of a bear and swinging through the trees of a forest. Donald is a very active duck!

In fact, I couldn't get past level three (out of seven) but still came back to the game again and again. To compound the panic, all the problem-solving is against the clock, so as you try to puzzle with the pyramids in Egypt, the bar on the left-hand side slides down mercilessly.

The only thing missing from this game is an indicator to show when



your weapon is about to run out. All of the weapons you can use seem to be timed and it can prove very frustrating to encounter an old granny, getting ready to smash her head in with your mallet, when you discover that it has just run out.

This and *Sonic* are undoubtedly the greatest games ever on the Master System. I must admit, previously I approached Master System games with trepidation, but nowadays I'm champing at the bit to find out just how far they can push this little machine. The way Sega are going, the Master System could make a massive comeback in 1992.

● Les "dead duck" Ellis



Can't find Donald in your local? Don't throw a bluey, we got our copy from Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759. Just £24 for duck à la Game Gear.

The graphics are always the first thing that amazes you in Disney games, and the boys in the US have done an incredible job to make the Game Gear do everything but stand on its head.

The main Donald sprite is superbly detailed, even more so than the MS version, with a large range of facial expressions. These change from his normal ready-for anything face to a scowl when you keep him waiting for too long to a shiver when he gets cold in the arctic. When he moves around the screen he really flows, it really does look like a cartoon.

There's stacks of music, and every tune is much better than the MG,

DUCK!

HE'S ON GAME GEAR, TOO!

difficult to make any progress, but it only took a few goes



before everything clicked and I really got into it. As time went on, it transpired that this version is quite a bit easier than the MS one. This is

mostly due to the shorter levels, but I was soon on the last level which was a mite disappointing.

Even so, *The Lucky Dime Caper* is a

great platform game, and highly recommended.

● Les "Duckula" Ellis



PROFILE

DONALD DUCK ● SEGA ● £24.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 6
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER

Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
(071) 7278070

which goes to prove that there is an enhanced sound chip in the GG after all. Each level has a most suitable ditty, with the Egyptian level being the most atmospheric of the lot.

On first playing *Lucky Dime* I was slightly dubious about the standard of gameplay. It seemed frustratingly

GRAPHICS

▲ Your Game Gear won't know what's hit it.
▲ Adjusted for the smaller screen.

90

SOUND

▲ Loads of different tunes, all very good.
▲ The effects are a bit ropey.

83

GAMEPLAY

▲ Simplicity improves the game.
▲ Very addictive on the later levels.

92

CHALLENGE

▲ Every level varies in strategy.
▲ Could soon be completed, though.

85

Lucky Dime Caper successfully brings the magic of Disney to the Game Gear.

PROSCORE 90

Popils is the name of a very naughty sorcerer. Just for fun, he's kidnapped the beautiful Princess Bubbles and trapped her inside a high-rise maze filled with all sorts of nasty blocks. "Why a maze filled with all sorts of nasty blocks?" I hear you ask. Well, he's a bit of a mind-game merchant, you see, and loves to see people struggling over mental problems.

You, as Prince Valiant, must punch, kick and head-butt your way through the maze without disturbing the wrong blocks, or it's goodbye girlfriend!

Just to prove how nasty Popils is, there are 100 levels to battle your brain through before you can get down and talk marriage and kids with the missus.

It may look cute and cuddly but *Popils* is probably the most fiendishly inventive torture device since Erno Rubik unleashed his maddening cube upon us! More terrifying than the Iron Lady, more insanity-inducing than Chinese water torture, *Popils* will have any sane person tearing their hair out after just a few levels of play.

Addictive just isn't the word for this

PRO TIP Press button 1 before each level begins for secret hints on how to tackle the impending onslaught.



The quickest reactions are needed to master *Popils*.

bodies. Your babe yells "Help!" every so often, and in reply your head, arms and legs flash out in attempts to get to her!

Unfortunately, the evil Popils has also left some of his pets in the maze. These are lethal to the touch and include green slime-balls and blue vampire bats, who wobble and flap their respective ways around in search of prey!

The sound emanating from the Game Gear's speaker is straight out of Play School too! A jaunty little fairytale-style tune bops its way throughout the levels, and seems well-designed for the game. Sound effects are limited to the block explosion noise and the fatal hit noise, but they're really all that's needed and do the job well.

Popils is a massively playable game, and gameplay is flexible enough to allow for small margins of error. Hanging over precarious edges and attempting to catch the falling girlie is a job for the brave of heart only, but a distinctly rewarding one!

On the surface, *Popils* may seem to be a rather lightweight affair, but digging deeper it reveals itself to be a puzzler of great depth and originality (it even has a level editor/designer built in!). Considering it's Domark's first venture into the Game Gear market, I can only urge them to keep up the good work! Pop this in your GG now!

● James "clueless" Scullion

MAGICAL PUZZLE

POPILS

extraordinary Game Gear puzzler. On trying to think of a similarly nightmarish piece of software, the only one I could come up with was *Gem-X* on the Amiga, and that was nowhere near as tough. This is the most unforgiving game I've come across on the Game Gear. One wrong move and one life lost, although in fairness you've unlimited continues, so for the less mentally-adept (ie, me!), a trial-and-error method is guar-

anteed some degree of success.

Graphically, *Popils* looks as if it could have been designed by a four-year-old. This is not to say it's amateurish at all, but rather is a purposeful and successful ploy to accentuate the cute feel. Primary colours abound, with cotton-wool clouds in a pastel blue sky fronted by green puff-ball shrubberies. The two main sprites (yourself and the Princess) are both tiny red-heads, with plenty of animation crafted into their minuscule

PROFILE POPILS ● DOMARK ● £TBA ● OUT SEPT

CART SIZE 1Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 100
SKILL LEVELS 5
FEATURES battery

SUPPLIER
Domark
Ferry House
51-57 Lacy Road
Putney, London
SW15 1PR
(081) 7802222

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Sickly cute but oh-so-lovable.
- ▲ Well-designed for minimal eye-strain.

84

SOUND

- ▲ Paint the whole world with a rainbow!
- ▼ Minimal FX, more would've been appreciated.

79

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Spot-on collision detection.
- ▲ Very userfriendly and encouraging.

90

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Easy to pick up but fiendishly addictive.
- ▲ Later levels not so easy (under statement!).

94

Late nights aplenty with the maddening *Popils* – THE puzzler for the GG!

PROSCORE 89

Popils: the best ever Game Gear puzzler?

With Domark getting into full swing on the Sega, the arrival of their conversions of well-known Mega Drive games on the 8-bit machines is extremely welcome (especially the imminent *Pit-Fighter!*).

The moshing madness of marble motion has been popular on every format known to man. In *SEGAPro#8* the Master System version gained a whopping 88%, with the Mega Drive version in *SEGAPro#3* pulling in 81%. It just goes to prove that when it comes to playability, this old game can still do the business.

The basic premise is to guide a marble down a series of ramps to a finish line. Plenty of things are thrown in to challenge you, but primarily the strict time limit. Also scattered around are both static and aggressive obstacles. Hey, no-one said this game was easy!



After avoiding the industrial sized hoovers you have to dive frantically for the ramp. Round the corner and you have to face another hazard. Hit the bowl and get thrown over to the other side of the maze. There a black ball waits to do the dirty and knock you over the edge.

So, what's next? A Mega-CD version, perhaps? It wouldn't be a bad thing as it seems whatever format *Marble Madness* touches, and whoever is behind the version (with Electronic Arts and Virgin handling other translations), you're guaranteed a whopping good game.

Things don't start off too promising, with no title screen and some simple options on a vacant black background. There are eight skill levels, and a sound select to listen to the nine musical tracks and 14 sound effects. *Marble Madness's*

main fault lies here; the difference between the eight difficulty levels is negligible. The game is dead easy on level one and doesn't progress from there. Your last option allows you to change the control of the ball, assigning directions to either the joypad diagonals or not.

Into the game, and you'll find yourself in the same game as on the MS. The graphics are spot on, moving at a tremendous speed. All the obstacles and inhabitants of the levels are faithful to the Tengen coin-op.

GRAPHICS

- ▲ As close to the coin-op as you're gonna get.
- ▲ Bigger and bolder than the MS version.

82

SOUND

- ▲ A wide range of tunes play throughout.
- ▼ Sound effects limited to a few inaudible noises.

70

GAMEPLAY

- ▼ Very difficult to get used to the control.
- ▼ Harsh boundaries on the ramps.

79

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Eight difficulty levels are very similar.
- ▼ No enough stages to make you replay often

78

A direct MS version – complete with all the gameplay faults.

PROSCORE 79

For a game with only six levels, there are loads of tunes. Each of them is completely different, ranging from hip-hop up-tempo jives to low-down smoochy tracks for those tough later levels. And even with the constrictions of the tacky GG speaker, they do their best to enliven the proceedings. Sound effects are few and even though they're quite good, the music tends to drown them out.

In the arcades, the initial hook of *Marble Madness* was its trackball controller. While the larger joypads of the home Segas tended to get away with the odd control method, the GG version really suffers. Despite the option of control method, it just never feels right. If you play on diagonals, you find it hard to get the joypad direction, and if you play on left-right-up-down the control doesn't make any sense.

Also bringing down the playability is the dodgy sprite collision. Quite often I found myself dropping off a cliff when I was positive I was miles away. This is especially annoying on the narrow runways.

I found myself really getting into *Marble Madness* when I first picked it up. But after a while, the flaws in the gameplay detracted from the long-term experience. Just the tightening of the gameplay would have made this an essential purchase, but now even fans would be well advised to play this before they buy.

● Les "marble arch" Ellis

MARBLE MADNESS

PROTIP On level one, instead of going straight for the exit, race at the ramps just before it and jump over to pick up the bonus. It takes a lot of time to get it right, but is well worth perfecting.

PROFILE

MARBLE MADNESS ● DOMARK ● £TBA ● AUGUST

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 6
SKILL LEVELS 8
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER

Domark
Ferry House
51-57 Lacy Road
Putney, London
SW15 1PR
☎ (081) 7802222

Mario Lemieux is one of the top American National Hockey League players, even appearing in a recent NHL all-stars team alongside the great Wayne Gretzky.

His rise to fame started when he was brought in to save the then-ailing Pittsburgh team from relegation. Not only did he do that, but he took them on to the play-offs and now leads one of the most successful ice hockey teams of the Nineties. Mario Lemieux is widely considered to be one of the best all-rounders in his field (or should that be rink?).

It's not surprising, then (especially after the resounding success of *EA Hockey*), that he was chosen to endorse a potentially huge Sega licence! Billed as "Fast and Furious... the ice hockey game you've been waiting for!", it promises ferocious speed and dynamic action. So lace up those blades and hit the ice.

Plenty of colourful pre-game statics greet you on power-up, mainly consisting of digitised shots of Mario in various poses. A high-speed backdrop is superimposed by the menu, which contains a large range of game types, including a couple of sub-games.

By-passing that and into the game proper reveals pre-match hype delivered by the obligatory commentator, a rather dapper chap with a mike whose bulk covers the whole screen.

Facing off is represented by a huge inset. The animated ref drops the puck into the centre and the opposing forwards tussle for possession. As soon as the puck is passed back to the rest of the team, the action flips to the main side-on view. A third of the rink is shown onscreen at a time, and the "camera" keeps the puck central, the view scrolling smoothly back and forth with the action. The rink itself is an icy light-blue, and all the regulation markings have been added, as well as a huge Genesis (the American name for the Mega Drive) logo in the centre circle.

The animated audience really believe in participation, and clap, boo and cheer as you show your skating prowess (or lack of it!) as well as bouncing up and down in their seats in excitement!

The players are professionally ani-



mated, and have been coloured with the real NHL team strips, but move rather sluggishly, which really decreases the authentic feel necessary for this kind of sports sim. Controlling them is, in certain respects, a fairly complicated affair. The player you wish to control must

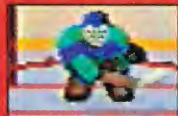
He shoots, he scores. Taking the puck round the keeper and slapping it into the net is the way to do it.

be chosen by scrolling through the team until he's highlighted, and this too is detrimental to the gameplay, slowing it down a great deal.

Scoring goals isn't easy as the goal-minder really knows his stuff. A great deal of practise is needed before you can fool him. Netting the puck results in the obligatory airhorn sound, which is realistically loud.

The sub-games, which can be practised separately, and also appear in-match, comprise a shoot-out mode, rather like penalties in soccer, and a fight mode, which occurs when a nasty foul has been committed. In the latter, two players slug it out with a wide range of attacking and defensive moves.

PRO TIP



The keepers are very tough to beat, so use a bit of thought when shooting. Try to position a

player near the keeper then have a slapshot from way out. The puck will always rebound off the keeper for your close player to knock in.



Facing off starts the game. While moving forward towards the puck you have to knock it backwards to your team.



Squaring up, these two opponents try to sort out a controversial decision, a variety of moves are available to each fighter.



When a match is drawn there is a shoot out. The puck is slid towards the striker and he has to time his swing so that the puck flies into the net.

	PITTSBURGH	WASHINGTON
STATISTICS SUMMARY 5		
SHOTS ON GOAL	35	09
2 ON GOAL	25	21
5 TIME IN OFFENSE	35	87
5 PENALTY GOALS	26	25
5 OFFENSE	36	00
POWER PLAY	24	00
SHOTS ON GOAL	37	00
AUG OFF TIME	00:1.20	00:10.00
PENALTY TIME	00:1.00	00:12.00

Unfortunately for *Mario Lemieux Hockey*, comparisons between it and EA's version of the same sport are inevitable. Although a fairly good game in its own right, Mario just doesn't have the downright playability that its rival has; the controls are harder, the sprites smaller, and the whole game a lot slower. *EA Hockey* wins hands down in all aspects, but you can still have a lot of fun with Sega's version.

TOURNAMENT TREE

CANADA
USA
SWEDEN
CZECH REPUBLIC
FINLAND
SLOVAKIA

MARIO LEMIEUX HOCKEY

CARTRIDGE

SPECIAL EDITION



PROFILE

MARIO LEMIEUX HOCKEY ● **SEGA** ● **£39.99** ● **OUT NOW**

CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	2	Sega UK
STAGES	league	16 Portland Road
SKILL LEVELS	3	London
FEATURES	versus	W11 4LA
		☎(071) 7278070

PROSCORE

73

Before you could say "diplomatic incident", a group of African revolutionaries kidnapped a former US president on a peace mission to the country of Zutura. The situation is very sensitive, so the CIA hire you and your pals in the elite Mercs corps to lead a covert operation to fly into foreign territory and rescue the ex-pres. Your secret organisation is made up of ruthless mercenaries and guerrillas; it was formed as the ultimate anti-terrorist force.

As you smear the camouflage paint onto your face, you think of the overwhelming odds you face. Chances are you will never get out alive!

Remember the Mercs motto: If it moves, kill it.

Just when you thought there couldn't be another *Ikari Warriors* clone, *Mercs* enters the devastation. In fact, to be completely fair, this is actually another "official" follow-up to *Commando* as *Mercs* is known as *Commando II* in Japan. And the MD version of *Mercs* not only contains the arcade conversion of Capcom's *Mercs*, but also the *Commando* original which came out all those years ago.

Mercs begins not with a bang, but with silence, and I for one was disappointed. No pounding soundtrack, just a massive *Mercs* monolith.

The sound it seems has been

PRO TIP Don't get stuck with the flamethrower when battling heavy weaponry. The guardians take some killing and flames against a Hind is like water off a duck's back.

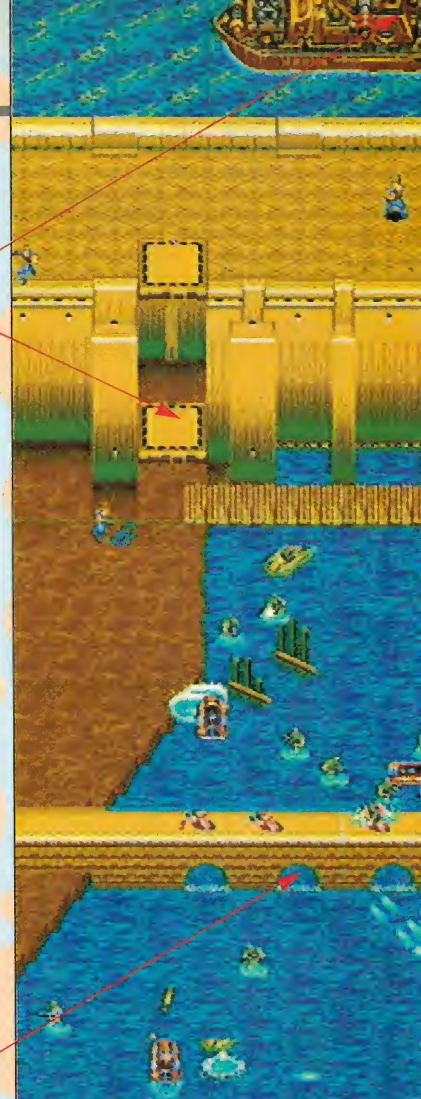


Dodge the bombs and then run from side to side, shooting and using mega crush to avoid flamethrower

Use the lift to reach the dam



A bridge too far! Hit it in the middle to take it out



saved for the game, where you get 34 tunes and 34 sound effects, all reminiscent of the old arcade machines. But that is their problem, they all sound as if they've been played on furry old guitars and worn out synthesizers. The actual gun noises and explosions are adequate but not as Earth shattering as you might expect. For a game sporting mouth-watering graphics, the sound leaves a lot to be desired.

To set the scene on both game variations, original and arcade, you get a few neat screens detailing the plot, and exactly why you have to kill thousands of people and inflict immeasurable amounts of damage to property. This can be skipped passed and you can get straight into the game.

The original game is just like everyone remembers it. The trees surround your vertical assault through the forests and towns of Germany. All



You'll soon be on to the third level of the Arcade game of *Mercs*; this game is so easy, your sister could play it.



Mercs is available in Japan. However, it's not called *Mercs* over there! It's called *Commando II*. Don't ask, why? Don't ask, who? Just accept it. To avoid confusion, the infamous importers are selling it as *Mercs*. We got our copy for just £35 from the inimitable Console Concepts at 223b Waterloo Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2HS. Tel: (0782) 712759. *Mercs* is also available in the States, but it doesn't matter which version you get as the cart's "machine sensitive". (That is, it will automatically display the title screen as "Mercs" and the storyline in English if your machine is properly configured for the UK.)

PROFILE	MERCS	SEGA	£39.99	OUT NOW
	CART SIZE	8Mbit		
	PLAYERS	1!		
	STAGES	9 (a) 8 (b)		
	SKILL LEVELS	3		
	FEATURES	n/a		
		SUPPLIER		Sega Europe
				14 Portland Road
				London
				W11 4LA
				(071) 7278070

MERCS



● Enemy boats fire guided torpedos

the landscapes have been changed – and shortened – and you now get a massive piece of military hardware at the end of a stage instead of the old onslaught of thousands of little Germans. The odd forced perspective is kept, and subsequently along with it the frighteningly accurate collision detection. Your task is not eased by the solitary life that is bestowed; this soon disappears.

If this is the original version, then

judging by the *Mercs* arcade section we haven't progressed much. Visually, they both look similar with an identical viewing perspective. But the arcade stages are even quicker to complete, and the collision detection more generous. You even get five continues in this variation, and

ing than other *Commando* clones.

My only main worry is that anyone who's played either the coin-op or computer version will be extremely disappointed to not find a two players onscreen option. This doubled the fun value of *Mercs* and is a severe omission.

On the original version you only have one life per character, you find other mercenaries in tents dotted around the warzone. Inside you get to spend all the medals you've collected on useful items.



PRO TIP Save your rockets for the big guys. The first massive Harrier jump jet can be destroyed with three hits – but two missiles and a short burst of fire is just as good (especially in Original mode).



the level's end machinery presents little problem to any soldier armed with the correct weapon.

The power-ups and different types of weapon are brutal, with the flame-thrower taking the *Mercs* prize for extreme carnage. I liked the way each soldier burned away to ash when the flames touched them. There's also the great *Mercs* feature of stealing an enemy jeep and mowing down the enemy. These little variations make it that bit more interest-

But there's plenty of challenge here, with the original game being far harder than the arcade option. Anyone who completes this during the first day's play should call themselves Jazza and buy a rugby shirt...

● Damian Butt

● Destroy huts to stem a flow of soldiers



Over halfway in the Arcade section and things are starting to get a bit challenging (at last). Massive jeeps now trundle onto the screen, and if it says Enter, you can jump inside of one and drive around blasting the enemy. Your life's running low, so watch out.

GRAPHICS

▲ Identical to the coin-op in every respect.
▲ Large, varied machines add surprise.

87

SOUND

▼ An instantly forgettable and grating tune.
▼ Very boring effects.

56

GAMEPLAY

▼ No two-player model.
▲ Blasting fun with no pretensions.

72

CHALLENGE

▼ Arcade option is too short and easy.
▲ Original game is a real test.

75

Gorgeous graphics, but lack of gameplay soon tires the old format.

PROSCORE 74

PRO TIP

Use the green blob gun for everything. It is by far the best for heavy hardware and troop wasting. With power-ups it can be four wide, and we are talking total devastation.



Even though this version includes all the levels of the arcade, they are completed in a fraction of the time and I never once felt panicked or tense. Level one, for instance, only lasts 40 seconds. It is obvious that this

The chance to drop into enemy territory, machine-gun thousands of unsuspecting enemy troops, lob endless grenades into packed wooden huts and drive some flash hardware was too good an opportunity to miss.

You are one of the Mercs, trained to rip both your arms off and leave no sign of violence, a paid assassin with a big gun.

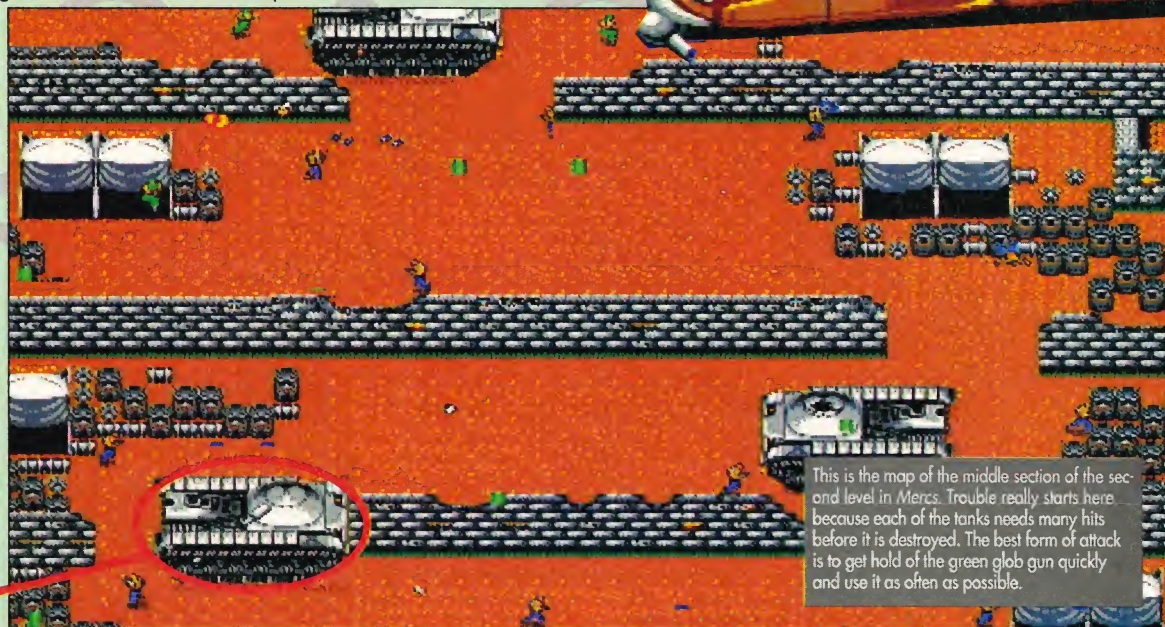
The former President has been kidnapped again! (He really shouldn't go to Beirut with an "I am an important diplomat" T-shirt on.) Now you must rescue the wrinkled has-been while causing as much bloodshed as possible. You face impossible odds, but you laugh in the face of certain death and, like any self-respecting brainless beefcake, you plunge into the fray with gattling guns a-blasting.



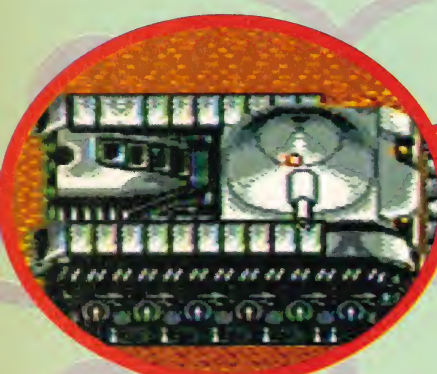
Let's get one thing straight, I really enjoyed MD *Mercs* despite its fairly low review; the main disadvantages were no two-player arcade mode and the ease with which you could progress. Hooray, I thought, at least the MS version could improve on this – think again. *Mercs* has inherited all the flaws of its 16-bit counterpart and added a few of its own.

The graphics are slightly blocky but colourful with some fine detail on the guardians and the lower levels. I was glad to see the Hind helicopter back

complete; after two games I had rescued the former President in the measly time of 11 minutes. The super tough MS guardians were reduced to rubble in seconds without the use of grenades. Even the mighty tanks and train which took me two hours to crack on the MD was



This is the map of the middle section of the second level in *Mercs*. Trouble really starts here because each of the tanks needs many hits before it is destroyed. The best form of attack is to get hold of the green glob gun quickly and use it as often as possible.



in action and looking as deadly as ever.

The *Mercs* badge and animated intro are all very nice but options are non-existent and sound is dire. I can honestly say that the pre-guardian fanfare is the worst piece of synthesized trash I have ever heard.

a one-hit wonder.

On the whole, the controls are jerky and I'm sure the central character is facially deformed. The vehicles, which were characteristic of the arcade machine on the MD, are present but under emphasized. The jeep distorted when turning, the boat was

MERCs



Sega stock isn't exactly the most well managed in the world, so if you're having trouble getting hold of *Mercs*, you can do what we did and contact KC's Computers & Console Magic at 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1PY. Tel: (0509) 211799. They have the official UK version and it's flying off the shelves at the reasonable price of £28!

Now I can really stick the knife in. *Mercs* on the MS is incredibly easy to

unresponsive and whatever happened to the tank!

PROFILE	MERCs	SEGA	£32.99	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	7			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	n/a			
SUPPLIER	Sega Europe			
	16 Portland Road			
	London			
	W11 4LA			
	(071) 7278070			

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Great detail on the guardians.
- ▼ Weedy explosions and enemies.

80

SOUND

- ▲ Just say "no".
- ▼ Bland SFX.

25

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Fun to play at first...
- ▼ Then you discover how short it is.

73

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Initially well 'ard.
- ▼ You soon realise it lacks sufficient depth.

65

Mercs is instantly playable but has no long-term challenge

PROSCORE 68

release is aimed at novice shoot-'em-up fans, but even toddlers could complete this without breaking a sweat.

● Damian "another game completed" Butt



Into American football? If you are, then you can't have failed to have heard of "Iron" Mike Ditka. He used to be a professional American footballer before he left the gridiron to pursue a very successful career in coaching. Over the past few years, he has been head coach at the Chicago Bears. Indeed, with the large help of William "The Fridge" Perry, he led the Bears to win the Superbowl.

Like a couple of other football personalities - namely John Madden and Joe Montana - Mike has now lent his name to an American football game for the Mega Drive.

The only question remaining is, will the combined forces of Ballistic (responsible for *Hardball*) and Ditka be able to top the accuracy and playability of the *JMFs*? One thing's for sure, "Iron" Mike sure ain't gonna get sacked without a fight.

The powerful voice of Mike Ditka greets you as you turn on your Mega Drive, immediately catching your attention and interest. You then get the usual options, plus one extra interesting addition: to play the final drive of the game. From here you

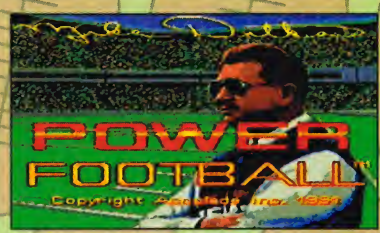
PROTIP The tactics of the real game also apply to *Power Football*. First down should always be a running play as this is low risk. Next, depending on your progress with the run, you should either do a short passing play or another run. Around 80% of the time in real football, they then go for a passing play on the third down. Equally, the defense usually goes to blitz the quarterback on the penultimate play as there are few people guarding the quarterback.

can also select whether or not you want music - you don't! The tune that plays through the game is an annoying whine.

After picking one of the 28 teams, you are thrown into the action, viewed from the classic end zone perspective. This is all very well, but the control method for choosing the plays is also exactly like *John Madden Football*. But unfortunately, it falls way short of the attractive and easily accessible *John Madden*,

Madden, really looking like a poor imitation of that game.

The graphics are an odd point. On the one hand there are some superb intro screens detailing Mike Ditka in various poses, but conversely the players on the pitch are very blocky with dodgy animation. It seems as if



the graphics artist spent more time flattering "Iron" Mike than he did on the actual game itself.

One excellent attribute of *Mike*

The offensive plays; only passing plays are displayed at present.

Scores shown for the individual quarters.

Progress stats for the current play.

Overall time remaining for this quarter.

Your defensive formations to choose from.

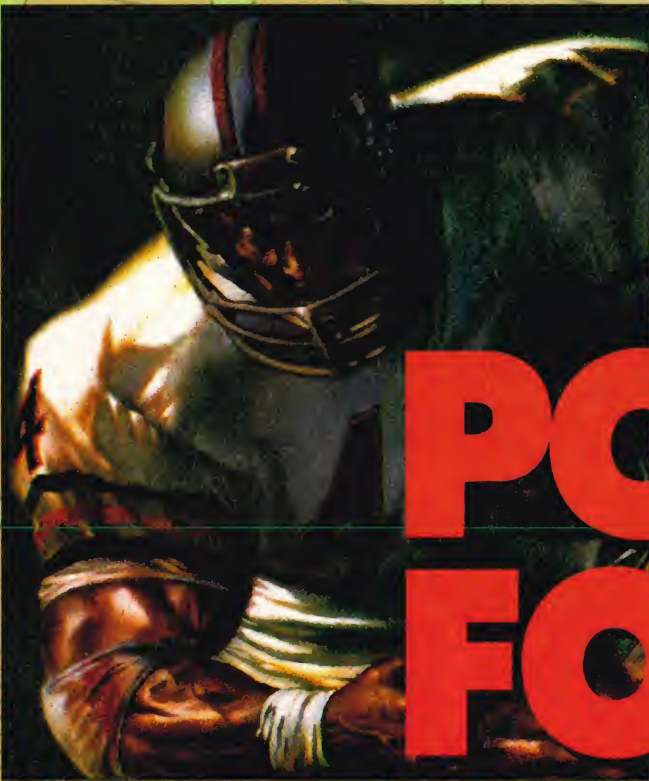
Ditka's, though, is the speech samples. These are all from Jim Tunney, a national referee in the real-NFL. They are clear and immeasurably enhance the atmosphere.

Mike Ditka's Power Football has some very strange and interesting quirks, but ultimately it'll be compared to the other two Am foot games. Basically, it's nowhere near as good as *John Madden*, and about on a par with *Joe Montana's*.

● Les Ellis

PROFILE POWER FOOTBALL ● BALLISTIC ● £34.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER Accolade Europe Bowling House Point Pleasure Wandsworth London SW18 1PE (081) 8770880
PLAYERS	2	
STAGES	n/a	
SKILL LEVELS	1	
FEATURES	Password	



The tight end receives the ball and makes a run for it. He manages to evade two separate tackles but is about to be brought down by two men at once.

GRAPHICS 83
 ▼ Terribly blocky players and jerky animation.
 ▲ Excellent intro and stats screens.

SOUND 82
 ▼ Turn the music off before you start.
 ▲ Great Jim Tunney samples and crowd effects.

GAMEPLAY 78
 ▼ Bad collision spoils the game entirely.
 ▼ Nothing here to make you come back to it.

CHALLENGE 80
 ▼ Far too easy to beat most of the teams.
 ▲ Helpful if you can't play American football.

If the gameplay were up to the presentation, this would be a Madden-beater.

PROSCORE 81

MIKE DITKA

POWER FOOTBALL





First there was Alex Kidd, then there was Sonic, and quietly sneaking between the both of them was Sega's unsung hero Wonder Boy.

The Boy, or man as he should now be since the original character appeared many years ago, is a product of the fans of Superman, Captain Power and, perhaps, Asterix. He may be young, but this little guy has all the superpowers of other heroes, and can mix it with the best of 'em.

The Boy has already appeared in the arcades, on computer and consoles, including Sega. WB's first self-titled game on the Game Gear (known as *Revenge of Drancon* in the USA) came out with the machine's launch, and the latest incarnation is from the Master System game, *WB in Monster World III: The Dragon's Trap*.

Here the Boy has been turned into a lizard by the Vampire Dragon. Now he must travel through Monster World and find the cross that will make him normal again.

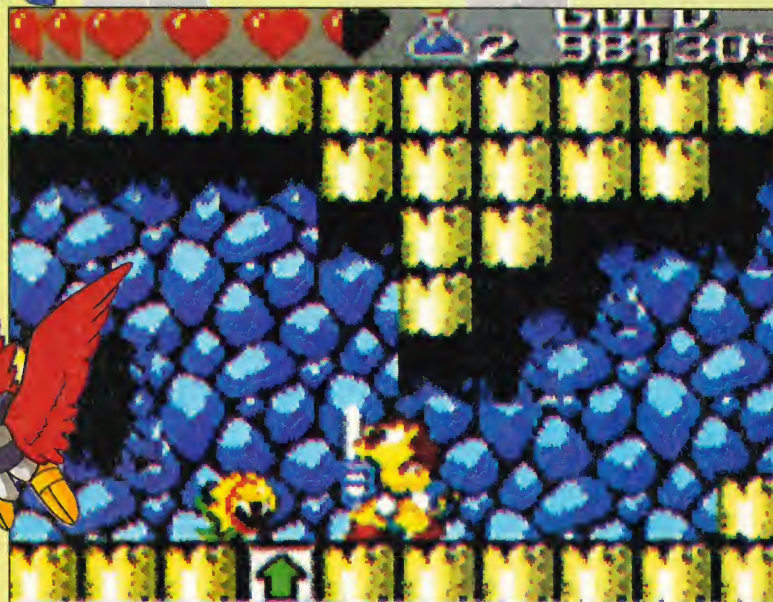


The poor lad they call Wonder Boy has just been turned into a lizard, but judging by the jolly music that welcomes you to this arcade adventure you'd think he'd just won the pools. However out of place it may seem, the title music is not too bad and complements the similarly out-of-place in-game music. Oddly, the sound effects are few and poor, just like the Master System original, which, let's face it, is what this Game Gear version is.

In fact the old MS version was pretty good, and the close-up graphics of the GG version show just how good. There's loads of detail on the many large characters, especially the Boy who can run, jump, duck and swing his sword via some very smooth animation. Things change a bit when the heroic chap gets transformed into a lizard, mouse, lion, piranha or hawk on the following levels, but the overall effect is constantly fun. Also of a decent size are the guardians at the end of the many levels. Sadly, their size is deceiving because they are all fairly wimpy, especially considering there's a password option.

Even though this often combines to produce a simple game, *Monster World II* avoids that danger by adding loads of rooms to explore (providing you can find the keys, of course) and a decent handful of pick-ups to find, and even though the action is essentially very repetitive the sheer enormity of the task in front of you will keep you running and slashing your sword for ages.

While this doesn't have the graphics and sheen of *Sonic*, it does contain something that *Sonic* is really missing, and that's long-term challenge. Although you always have a purpose to your wandering, you never feel as if there is any urgency to your quest and can quite happily



Wonder Boy knows no fear. After battling them on land, he wastes no time in diving into the drink to wrestle with his foes in the water. Luckily, he doesn't even need to breathe. If a route seems too tricky on land, you may be able to by-pass it by falling through a hole and going underwater. Watch out for the deadly homing piranha when you are submerged; they take a couple of hits but are positioned awkwardly and are faster than you.



PRO TIP

The Game Gear version of *Monster World* is closer to the Master System version than you'd think. If things get really tough, try using the old Master System passwords to get well into the game with loads of cash. The much-printed pass-



AVAILABLE IN
JAPAN



MONSTER WORLD

The Dragon's Trap



These plants may look like the harmless variety found in most gardens but they are, in fact, death-spitting demon seeds from hell.

spend ages exploring every location of a level, whether it be the castle of the first level or the towns and countryside later in the game. There is also a great deal of interaction, not just with the monsters but also with the odd strange inhabitant who happens to cross your path. And if you cross his palm with gold, you could receive something very useful.

Monster World II is a mature progression from the original *Wonder Boy* on the Game Gear. It combines the arcade elements of the original



The Boy may be "wonder"ful but he can't perform miracles. Changing into a lizard may look good, but it doesn't make you jump higher.

with strategy and adventuring more suited to *Castle of Illusion*. Basically, it's lots of fun and because of the vast levels, will last for ages. Obviously, the password option means that if you persevere, the

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Excellent use of colour throughout game.
- ▲ Large sprites and cute characters.

88

SOUND

- ▲ Bright and jingly music but out of place.
- ▼ Sound effects are few and far between.

80

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ You're never far away from some action.
- ▲ Heaps of exploration keeps you enthralled.

83

CHALLENGE

- ▲ It's tough, but perseverance will pay off.
- ▲ Password option is gratefully received.

82

A great progression from the original, essential for fans.

PROSCORE 84

PROTIP Throughout the game you will see grey squares on the walls. These are not just there for decoration; if you hit them, they will normally reveal a small item.



Doesn't Wonder Boy look splendid in his warrior attire? It almost seems a shame that he'll lose it all when he gets transformed into his other forms. All these other incarnations will be necessary to get the magic cross back, and your body returned to normal.



game could be completed within a day, but it is necessary because trudging through the simpler early levels could be very tiresome.

I whole-heartedly recommend this to Game Gear owners as terrific value for money, and although Master System owners have seen it all before, it gives the portable and long-lasting, good-looking arcade adventure that till *The Lucky Dime Caper* the GG was sadly lacking.

● Les "dragon breath" Ellis

PROFILE

MONSTER WORLD II ● SEGA ● £23 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 5
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES password

SUPPLIER
Kingbit Games
The James Thin Building
57 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 2JP
© (031) 2257682



This guy has more lives than a cat, more sequels than Friday the 13th and an appetite that would make us proud to include him in The Crowing Cock sausage sandwich run. Pac-Man has been with us since, well, since before young Damian was born.

The Pac chap was a smash in the arcades and a hit on most computers. Then came the sequels – or the Pac pack. Pac-Mania (SegaPro#1), from Tecmagik, was the most recent to appear, but not content with letting him revel in his own success, Pac-Man's girlfriend has tried to muscle in on the glory and steal some of the limelight.

The story runs like this. Pac-Man is so successful that his agent, Pete Pill, has been offered huge wads of cash if Ms Pac-Man will dish the dirt on her boyfriend's rise to fame. Instead, she grabs the cash and invests it in a game of her own – thus increasing the Pac household income to unheard-of levels. And all from a family of big-mouthed, fat, yellow people.

If popping pills is your thing then Ms Pac-Man has the options to let you do it any way you please. These options let you customise the game pretty much how you want it. You

can take on the ghosts single-handed, team up with a friend, or compete against an enemy. Sounds great, but the last two options have one major drawback:

when the players go to opposite ends of the screen they both vanish and you have to try to retrace your steps to get back, a bit like playing blindfold.

To look at, *Ms Pac-Man* is basically the same as any Pac-Man game. Although they can get quite large and complex, the mazes are your stock-standard Pac-Man constructions; tunnels to the sides, pills,

power pills, ghosts, etc. The characters are all pretty small and carry very little detail – we are talking Pac-Man here, though. Complex 3-D vector graphics are not something Pac-

Man fans have become familiar with. However, there's an attractive title screen and a few between level "story"



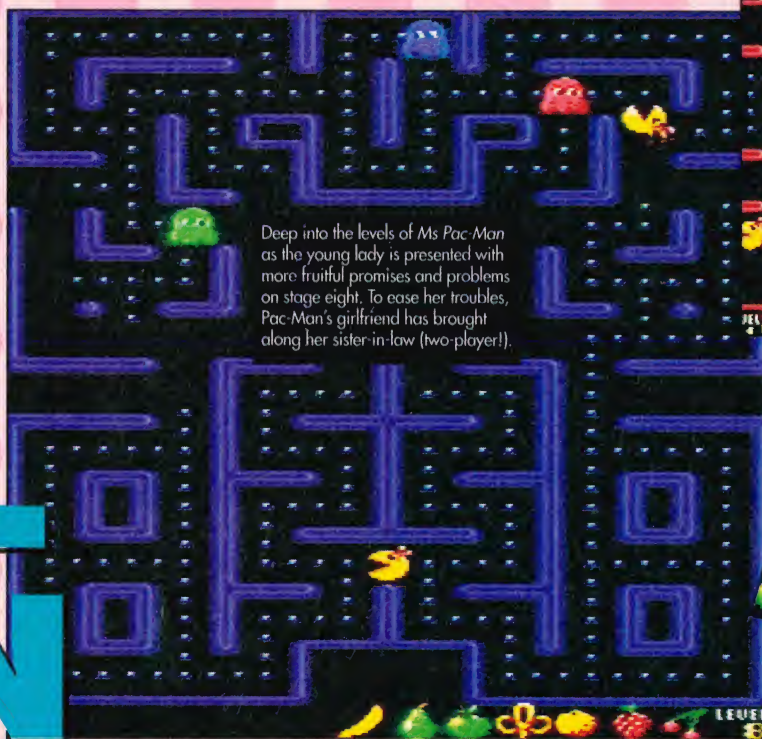
scenes to brighten things up. The aural accompaniment follows much the same path. There's a quick burst of music at the start of each level and the usual pill-crunching sound effects.

The concept of Pac-Man may be ancient, but it has stood the test of time better than any other for-

PRO TIP In two-player teamplay mode, make sure you stay in the same area of the screen. If you go off at tangents, you will find yourself disappearing and usually running into a ghost.

mat I know – even Space Invaders. Okay, so my granny could program this game (almost) and couldn't fail to make it enjoyable. The only question remaining is, why did Domark? *Ms Pac-Man* may be good, but three quid, let alone 30!, is a lot to pay for such a simple game.

● Les "pill popper" Ellis



Deep into the levels of *Ms Pac-Man* as the young lady is presented with more fruitful promises and problems on stage eight. To ease her troubles, Pac-Man's girlfriend has brought along her sister-in-law (two-player!).



Ms PAC-MAN



PROFILE

MS PAC-MAN ● DOMARK ● £29.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 1Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES endless
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER

Domark Software Ltd
Ferry House
51-57 Lacy Road
Putney
London SW15 1PR
© (081) 7802222

GRAPHICS	74
▲ Excellent title screen and between level shots.	
▲ Small, bland levels and graphics.	
SOUND	60
▲ Horrendous tune.	
▲ Minimal Pac effects for pick-ups etc.	
GAMEPLAY	74
▲ Very repetitive pill popping.	
▲ Various two-player modes are novel.	
CHALLENGE	76
▲ Absolutely stacks of difficult levels.	
▲ Four different maze themes.	
The one-player mode soon becomes boring – needs a friend to ensure longevity.	
PROSCORE	72



You are a Western seaman of the medieval era. Washed ashore on a small Okinawan island after your ship flounders in a heavy squall, you wake to find yourself in front of the local Samurai Lord.

He must like something about you, because instead of instantly decapitating you (customary practice on encountering barbarians in these parts!) he decides, for his own amusement, to place you in charge of three of his warriors: a ninja, a bowman and a staff-wielder.

To gain their respect and friendship, you must lead them through many miles of treacherous land and keep yourself, and them, alive!

On your way you will come across many opponents, but remember, etiquette demands that you bow pleasantly before beating their Eastern heads in.

This storyline seems to borrow heavily from the block-busting James Clavell novel *Shogun*, although this time it's shown from the Japanese angle. The authors themselves seem to be laughing up their kimono sleeves at us, saying "ho-ho, these Westerners know nothing about bushido and will perish in a most amusing manner". Unfortunately, in my case, they were absolutely right!

The intro statics are extremely tasty. There are no wide-eyed people in sight. Everything onscreen looks terribly Oriental, with pagodas, ninjas and samurais galore.

The

like medieval England than feudal Japan; the soundtrack being played on what seems to be a harpsichord! The grunts and groans are okay, the best being the scream of the fatally wounded. Aaarggggh!

Playing the game is rather hit-and-miss as all text is, rather unfortunately, displayed entirely in Japanese. Options screens cryptically hide their functions, trial-and-error being the key to success.

▲ If you are lucky enough to speak this language then a shopping trip

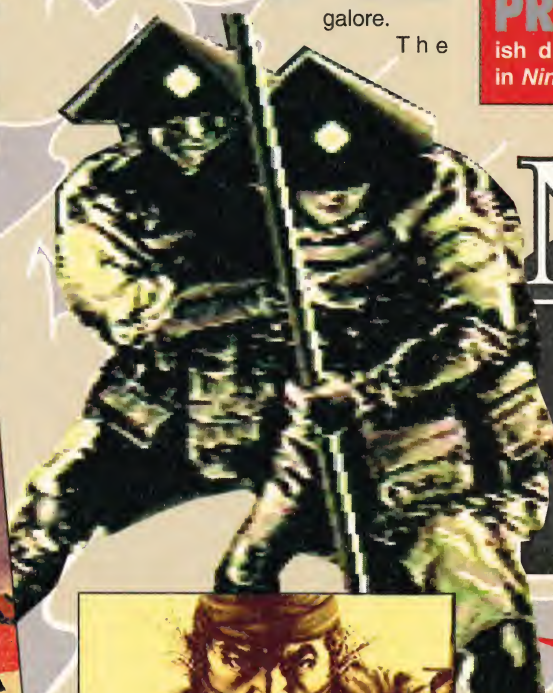
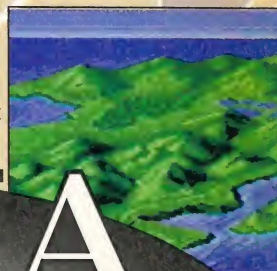
PRO TIP Invest in a Japanese/English dictionary before investing in *Ninja Burai*.



petitive rates!

The only other screen I came across was during battles. Occasionally instead of your man just disappearing when killed, the

opponents will meet and attack each other on auto-pilot. I always feel the lack of involvement in fight scenes is quite detrimental in most RPGs. Although die-hard fans will insist that they are just put in to appeal to arcade freaks, I would argue that



NINJA BURAI



action is set on a forced 3-D map with the sea lapping at the coastline and clouds rushing past overhead, adding greatly to the real-time feel of the program. The sprites are colourful enough but rather small, although there is a clear distinction between them.

Musically, *Ninja Burai* sounds more

could be in order. There is a weapon-seller, a grocer, an ugly old troll I presumed to be the oracle, and a vivacious young geisha girl offering rest and recuperation at extremely com-

they do provide much needed entertainment and variety that RPGs need.

Finally, although I feel there could be a rather cool game hiding in there somewhere, the let-down of foreign text is just too great to justify a high rating.

● James "Tai-Pan" Scullion



Die, evil Shredder! Well it certainly looks like him, doesn't it? Many brave warriors met their maker right here!



PROFILE	NINJA BURAI ● SEGA ● £29.95 ● IMPORT	
	CART SIZE	8Mbit
	PLAYERS	1
	STAGES	unknown
	SKILL LEVELS	1
	FEATURES	bat. back-up
	SUPPLIER KC's Computers and Console Magic 3 High Street Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 1PY (0509) 211799	

GRAPHICS	80
▲ Classic Japanese artwork.	
▲ Colourful landscapes.	
SOUND	77
▲ Medieval music adds to feel...	
▼ ...although rather occidental.	
GAMEPLAY	73
▲ Could well be fun to play...	
▼ ...but you'll need an interpreter!	
CHALLENGE	86
▲ Well 'ard adversaries add to difficulty.	
▼ Text is even more challenging.	
High quality RPG that suffers from being mainly Japanese in context.	
PROSCORE	79



NINJA GAIDEN

Ryu Hayabusa and his dragon ninja friends have been protecting Japan for many generations with few problems. As long as they retained the powerful Bushido scroll, everything would remain that way. The scroll is the central power source of the dragon ninjas, and had been secretly hidden away in the Dragon Clan village. But one day, a traitor broke free from the ninjas and, with the promise of money and power, revealed the location of the scroll to the darkest forces of the world. Unsurprisingly, the village was subsequently attacked by all sorts of evil ninjas, villains and gangsters. As Ryu returned home, all he found were the mutilated bodies of his friends and family – no scroll.

Now Ryu has to not only avenge the death of his compatriots, but also retrieve the all-powerful scroll before it's put to use by the dark forces.



Basing a game around the exploits of avenging ninjas is not exactly new, and the *Ninja Gaiden* series (which has progressed to a trilogy on the Nintendo) is the oldest exponent of this successful formula.

The storyline is built up right from the start with the Tecmo Theatre (a long sequence of widescreen pictures) explaining who you are and just what justification you have for killing several hundred people. Most Master System games seem to forsake this crucial bit of atmosphere building because of the lack of memory, but in *Ninja Gaiden* it's definitely a worthy addition.

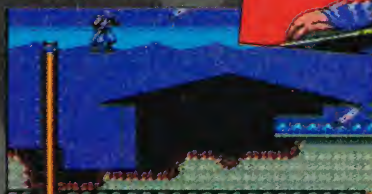
The only noticeable restriction seems to be on the size of the sprites. Ryu, the central character, is tiny compared to most games, but he does contain intricate detail and some beautiful animation when he carries out moves like swiping, throwing and, of course, somersaulting. The villains, too, are on the small side. Most level guardians are realistically sized,



At the end of each level you are treated to a scene from the Tecmo Theatre. Above you can see what happens when you complete the first level.



Want to lay your power-seeking hands on *Ninja Gaiden*? Well try to cut a dash to AMS Electronic Games, 9 Hay Lane, Kingsbury, London NW9 9EL. Just £32.95 will do the trick.



Ryu towers gracefully over the backdrop of Tokyo, the city in level three.

which, compared to most games, means pretty petite. Without doubt, the greatest bit of animation is when Ryu stretches up to a platform, grabs on the bottom of it, and swings himself over the ledge to land on it – inspired!

The levels are long but the backgrounds suffer from being very repetitive – although this does mean the scrolling is top speed. The first level, the forest, is dark and monotonous,

while the second, the building sites, repeat themselves regularly.

Where you start to realise the memory restriction of the Master System is when you hear the music. What has been created is essentially quite original, and contains some neat buzzes and hums, but there is just not enough of it. The tune plays all the while, but soon repeats itself and thus becomes quite irritating. What the music does do, is hide the sound effects, which is no bad thing as they're not that good.

Okay, so *Ninja Gaiden* doesn't

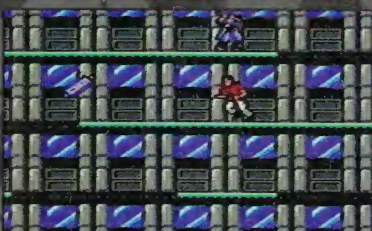




Don't move, you creeps! You killed my girlfriend and family so now it's time for you to go the same way. Get ready to meet your maker!

PROFILE NINJA GAIDEN ● SEGA ● £32.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE	2Mbit	SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	1	Sega UK
STAGES	8	16 Portland Road
SKILL LEVELS	1	London
FEATURES	n/a	W11 4LA
		☎ (081) 7278070

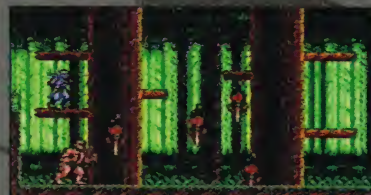
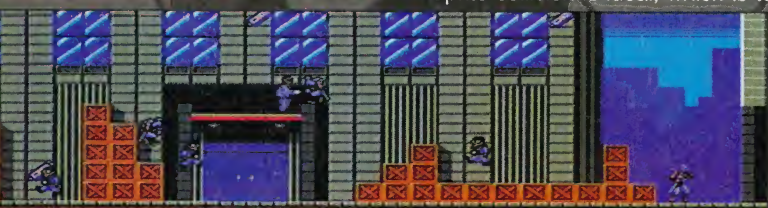


PRO TIP Always keep an eye out for scrolls that are hidden in the scenery; they show you where the hidden rooms are. On level one, there are two (pictured). Here just jump into the wall. In the room below you can jump and climb up the wall to get to another one.

sound too good so far, but just start playing it and you'll start to realise what a terrific game it really is, containing some of the most compelling gameplay seen this year.

The difficulty curve is set exactly right, so the first level is spent getting used to all the different moves and weapons available to the ninja. You soon find yourself pulling off highly improbable spinning jump attacks against the enemy warriors and picking up all the icons you can get. From level two onwards, the attacks become more constant and the levels aren't quite so straightforward. Plastered all over the levels are power-ups and weapons icons that you will need to get to make life easier. Obtaining all of these can take quite a bit of strategy, especially the ones hidden in the secret rooms.

Sprite collision is ideal; which is to

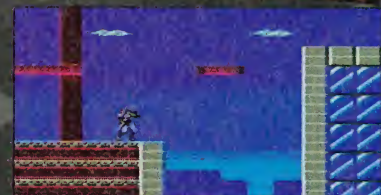
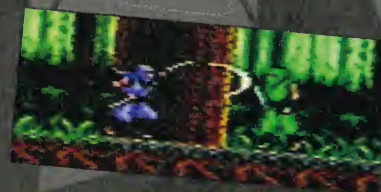


The first level takes Ryu through the forest. It is here you can get used to the many moves.

say, it's biased in your favour! However, it's not that generous, and if there's a ninja-dude on a platform you want to get to, you'll find yourself losing lots of energy before he's disposed of.

Essentially, *Ninja Gaiden* is one of those games that encourages you to come back. Every time you die, you always feel that if you had one more life, you would have finished the stage. It's dead easy to get into, but complex enough to keep you enthralled, and is, without doubt, the best beat-'em-up on the Master System – EVER!

● Les "Van Cleef" Ellis



The platform may be 12-foot up in the air, but your super ninja somersault should do the trick.

GRAPHICS	83
▲ Story screens are more than just decoration.	
▲ Brilliant animation on the main character.	
SOUND	62
▼ Very few effects that aren't too hot.	
▼ Decent tune but a bit too repetitive.	
GAMEPLAY	90
▲ You'll soon have that ninja doing all the moves.	
▲ You feel compelled to see the next section.	
CHALLENGE	91
▲ Easy to get into; difficulty curve set just right.	
▲ These later levels cut you down to size.	

Undoubtedly the best beat-'em-up platform game on the MS.

PROSCORE 90

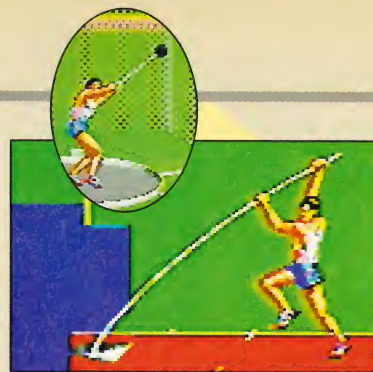
"Good afternoon, everybody. You're tuned into SegaProTV, and this is Larry Csonka reporting from Barcelona, host city of the Olympic Games 1992. We're here to give complete, uninterrupted coverage of each and every one of the challenging events that comprise this year's Games. But first over to my illustrious co-host, Mike Adamlee."

"Thanks, Csonk, and hello viewers! Today the events we'll be looking at comprise the 100m sprint, the hammer, archery, the 110m hurdles, pole vault, high diving and finally, staying poolside, the 400m freestyle. All of these events require plenty of skill, stamina and endurance, and we all know just how hard the athletes have trained all year for the chance of this, the highest sporting accolade... an Olympic Gold!"

The intro begins with the final marathon runner lighting the torch which burns for the length of the Games. Then comes the freeing of the white doves, and the Games begin. What better way of setting the scene for this magnificent event?

The most surprising thing about *Olympic Gold* is the almost complete similarity between the 8- and 16-bit versions. The programmers have gone to great lengths to reassure Master Systemers that their machine is still alive and kickin'!

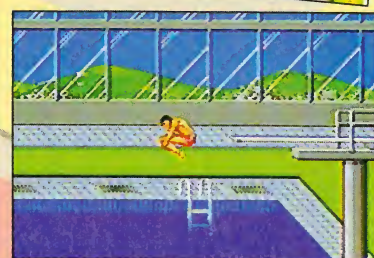
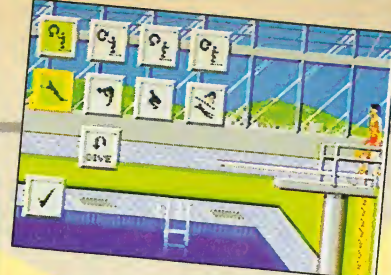
Differences between the two are limited to the size of the sprites (larger on the Mega Drive), and the amount of lanes in the race sections.



Obviously, the sound and graphics are superior on the Mega Drive, but the overall gameplay remains the same for both formats.

All seven events have their roots firmly embedded in the sports sims of old (*Hyper Sports*, *Daley's Decathlon*, etc), and reprise those aged games perfectly.

Character animation is excellent on both versions, and a colourful, packed stadium is well-crafted as the



Above: "Oi, you! I've already told you about dive-bombing! Any more and you're out of the pool, do you hear me?"

background setting.

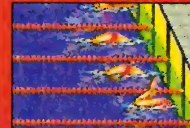
Soundwise there's not much to go on. A suitably pompous tune blares in between events and a medal win

OLYMPIC GOLD

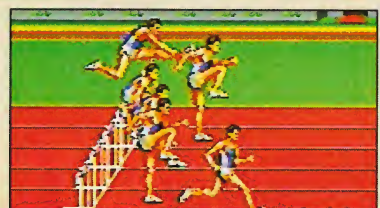
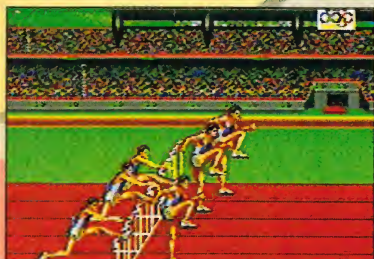


Above: Robin Hood would not be proud of these arrers!

PRO TIP When competing in the 400m freestyle, keep a regular pace till the last 50m. If you speed off at the start of the race you'll be knackered halfway through and have to stop dead, thus losing the race!

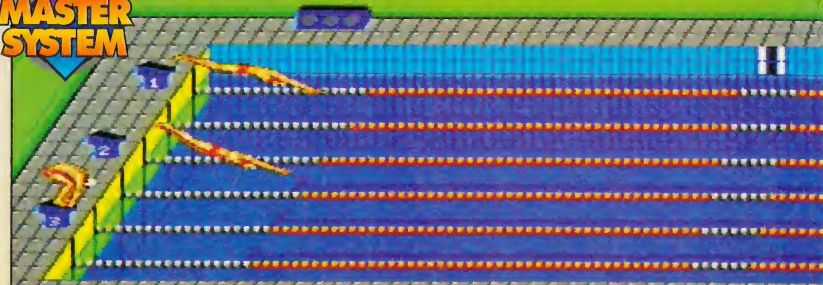


Above: whether you win or not, at the end of the Games, you're given a spectacular firework display!



Above: and here we see Les in the lead, closely followed by dynamic Damian and speedy Scullion.

MASTER SYSTEM





SPORTS MASTERS

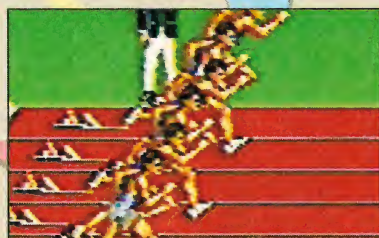
MASTER SYSTEM

results in your national anthem being played, not forgetting the Coca-Cola theme tune played intermittently throughout the games (they are, after all, this year's sponsors). Effects are more varied, with each event having its own particular in-game noises. For instance, the thud of your arrows hitting home in the archery, and the ba-dooinggg of the springboard in the diving contest, not forgetting the roar of the crowd as a good move is pulled off!

This is a game for all nations, with a choice of eight different languages to choose from, and the playing of your chosen nationalities' anthems on the occasion of you receiving a medal.

Most of the events are based on the wobble-as-fast-as-you-can principle, with the wobbling replaced on the joystick by battering a couple of buttons as fast as is humanly possible! Others rely on a touch more skill, with the correct sequence of button presses necessary for a respectable showing.

All of the events are good, challenging fun, but a couple stand out on both formats, my particular favourites being the hammer and the archery. Getting to grips with the hammer relies on a combination of speed and coordination for a decent throw, and winning the archery depends purely on accuracy. The crosshairs wiggle about as if you've had one too many, and a wind hazard adds to the difficulty. The other events are also great fun, but I had some difficulty with both the diving and pole vault. The diving because everything happens with blurring speed, making the correct move rather hard to execute, and the pole vault because of the complexity and



skill associated with the sport. To me, though, this all adds to the authenticity of the game, as the generally recognised harder sports were actually harder!

There are three skill levels, which really reflect the difficulty of competing at the club, national and Olympic standard. Your club opponents are fairly easy to beat, but at Olympic level these guys just aren't messin' around! Luckily there's a full training schedule which you have the option to partake in, and it's advisable to do so if you want to get to the top!

Being a big armchair sportsman, I derive a great deal of satisfaction from sports simulations, and if you do too, then *Olympic Gold* is a must!

● James "Bannister" Scullion

GRAPHICS	84
▲ Smooth sprite animation throughout.	
▲ Realistic and relevant backdrops.	
SOUND	71
▲ Sound effects are great but sparse.	
▲ A wide range of tunes.	
GAMEPLAY	82
▲ Grab your friends and gather round.	
▲ Many events means much variation.	
CHALLENGE	85
▲ Choose club standard for a breeze.	
▲ You have a tough time on Olympic standard.	

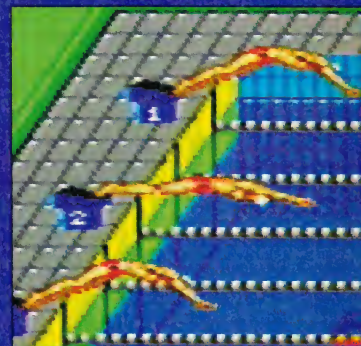
Welcome, sports fans, to the best game of its type on the Mega Drive.

PROSCORE 81

PROFILE	OLYMPIC GOLD	●	US GOLD	●	£39.99(MD) £34.99(MS)	●	OUT NOW
	CART SIZE	4/2Mbit				SUPPLIER	
	PLAYERS	4				US Gold	
	STAGES	7				Unit 2/3, Holford Way	
	SKILL LEVELS	3				Holford	
	FEATURES	versus				Birmingham	
						B6 7AX	
					(021) 6253388		



Above: dizzy, my head is spinnin'! Actually, my whole body is spinning, and I don't feel too well! Can I sit this one out, please?



Top left: will anyone ever make the pole vault? As you can see, James didn't! Left: keep those knees up for that perfect hurdling technique!

Above: a clean start here as the 400m freestyle gets underway.

SPORTS GEAR

Game Gear owners, stop! Don't bother with playing this through the Master Gear, the graphics are tiny. Just as well US Gold have already thought of this problem, and plan to bring out a special Game Gear version which we'll be reviewing next issue.



GRAPHICS	81
▲ Some excellent animation on all events.	
▲ Good backgrounds packed with detail.	
SOUND	52
▲ Title music just about scrapes it.	
▼ Atrocious rendering of national anthems.	
GAMEPLAY	82
▲ Plays just like the Mega Drive version.	
▲ Lots to learn and perfect in varying styles.	
CHALLENGE	86
▲ More difficult than Mega Drive version.	
▲ Easy for beginners to get competing.	

Relive those oft-missed Specy days with *Olympic Gold*.

PROSCORE 80

If ever there was a game that put Sega on the map, it must be *Out Run*, the most celebrated racing game in the civilised world. The sights, sounds and smells (almost) of zipping along the streets of America have been portrayed on nearly every gaming format known to man.

The premise of the game is amazingly similar to that of *The Cannonball Run* movie, bar two major factors: there are no competitors and no police. Your aim is simply to impress your girlfriend enough to keep her in your shiny Ferrari Testarossa – not that owning the Ferrari would be enough!

Fail to speed through four of the ten stages quick enough and you'll be demoted to the geek squad, and made to live a life without a girlfriend. However, complete the course in the allotted time, and a bedside companion is guaranteed for life. Is that incentive enough for you?



From the screeching tunes to the starter at the beginning of the race, you know that the remnants of the original arcade machine and more have been squeezed into the Game Gear's tacky shell.

New to GG *Out Run* is an option to race head-to-head against the computer car on a selected stage. Admittedly, if you choose an automatic gear box (effectively choosing easy level) then you'll have no problem beating his blue Porsche every time. Braver Pros will choose manual

FRUSTRATION FACTOR



This game is just far too easy. The layout of every stage is practically the same, so the only difficulty increments are between the auto and manual gearbox. Not even the amount of cars increases; your drive on the last stage is as trouble-free as it was on the first. Braking is also very harsh, which makes it easy to avoid oncoming cars even if you leave it till the last moment. True Pros will complete it within five plays on manual transmission.

transmission, of course, but even there you'll encounter few problems.

Unfortunately, changing gear is done by pushing up or down on the four-way. Inevitably, while zooming around a corner you automatically push a bit upwards at the same time, and thus change into low gear. Very annoying.

PROTIP Watch out for the chicanes near the end of the level. They require a tight right then left turn coupled with severe braking. Don't be afraid to brake, it wastes less time than pummeling into a tree.

The gameplay itself is surprisingly refreshing. I'm glad to see Sega have created a large variety of vehicles to contend with, and even a few extra chicanes to add spice to your journey. The ten stages have also been enhanced visually, with each one



Out Run is available in Japan under the same name. You can get the Japanese version (complete with unreadable instructions!) from Console Concepts, 223b Waterloo Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2HS. Tel: (0782) 712759. The price for a ride in the left-hand drive version is just £24.

Available in Japan at the moment is a Mega Drive version. You can also get that from Console Concepts, but we recommend you wait for our ProView next month in SegaPro.

PROFILE	OUT RUN	SEGA JAPAN	£24.99	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	2			
STAGES	10			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	Link-up			
				SUPPLIER
				Sega Europe
				16 Portland Road
				London
				W11 4LA
				(071) 727 8070

having a different backdrop. Undoubtedly, the best racing is in Las Vegas, where the background is not

PROTIP Rev up the engine before the starter drops his flag to speed away from the line with tyres screeching.

only very colourful and detailed, but it also camouflages the distant cars so you can't see them coming!

The three tunes come direct from the arcade machine and add to the experience of driving with the top

down and the wind blowing through your hair. Passing breeze, the stabbing symphony, is still my fave and a perfect complement to the frenetic action.

But before you rush out to purchase this, be warned: the game will quickly be completed. After just a handful of goes, you may find yourself on the last stage of the game. Encouraging for inexperienced players, but a waste of money for anyone who's played *Out Run* before. Recommended only for those who were hopeless at the original.

● Damian Butt



Every one of the ten backgrounds has its own distinctive style. Here you can see the bright lights and big city of New York. Watch out for the sausage-jocks!

GRAPHICS	84
▲ Neat fade-in/out between stages.	
▲ Backgrounds are varied with intricate detail.	
SOUND	78
▼ Only braking and collision effects.	
▲ Tunes are real summer scorches!	
GAMEPLAY	75
▲ Realistic impression of speed.	
▲ Simultaneous play should add scope.	
CHALLENGE	69
▼ For too easy for experienced Pros.	
▲ Simple introduction to <i>Out Run</i> .	
The graphics are groovy, the sound thumping, but lack of variety means short-lived appeal.	
PROSCORE	77

OUT RUN

Scientific opinion is divided on the matter of what came first: the wheel, fire or the original *Pac-Man* table-top pub game? Either way, Pac, like the Lego ship that protected us from the invaders from space, has become a part of video gaming history.

You control a little man with a flip-top head eating all the pills in a maze. In hot pursuit of the little yellow guy are ghosts of various colours who would very much like to chomp Pac-Man into oblivion.

Pac is helped by various fruit that his girlfriend occasionally leaves for him, as well as power pills dropped off by his cousin. These pills turn the ghosts into tasty morsels which can be devoured for extra points.

With limitless levels, points mean prizes, so get out there and bathe in nostalgia with one of the greatest games of all time.

PROTIP At the very start of the game all the ghosts go up the screen, so clear the bottom of the screen first.

Eating several ghosts at a time increases the bounty for each one. Wait till all the ghosts begin to congregate before you devour the pill.

PAC MAN

The title screen is disappointingly brief and unspectacular. With such gameplay simplicity, in concept and graphics, I would have expected a polished front-end and a dazzling array of options. But sadly not.



Aargh! Run for it. Pac is pursued by four ghosts but makes a run for it off the screen to the right. The cherries at the bottom give points.

There is the normal one-player game, plus a new two-player simultaneous game played via the link-up. Potentially, this expands playability no end with clever touches such as ghosts teleporting off one maze to appear on your opponent's. You can also

whether to play the game in close-up, or settle for the conventional panoramic view.

The graphics in the game are a carbon copy of the old pub machine with dark blue maze walls and rainbow ghosts all faithfully presented. It's just a pity the mazes weren't revamped for the new game.

Sound is so important in this style of game and all the tunes are again resurrected to liven up the gameplay. The now famous jingles evoking memories of intense table-play marathons in the back room of a seedy pub many years ago.

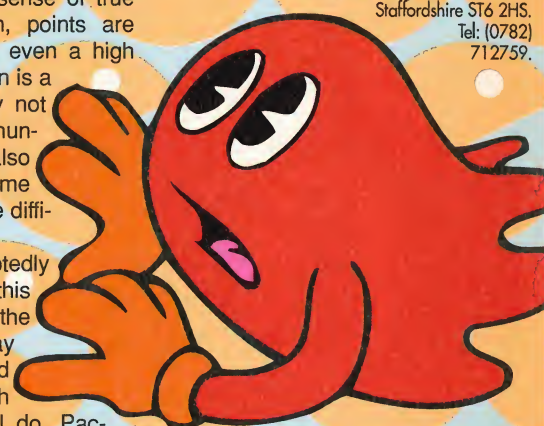
The only faults in Pac-Man's appeal are the repetitiveness of levels and the lack of a sense of true reward. With Pac-Man, points are everything and without even a high score table, progression is a shallow affair that may not be enough for trophy-hungry players. I would also have enjoyed some continues to combat the difficulty.

Nostalgia is undoubtedly what maintains this game's credibility in the competitive modern day market. If no-one could relate to it with such fondness as many still do, Pac-Man would surely have vanished long ago. Thankfully this is not the case. Long live Pac-Man!

● Damian Butt



Pac-Man is currently only available in America. At present, there are no plans to bring it over here officially. You can get the American import from Console Concepts, 233b Waterloo Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2HS. Tel: (0782) 712759.



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Faithfully recreated in old arcade style.
- ▲ Chases and ghosts evoke the old charm.

75

SOUND

- ▼ You'll hum the annoying jingles for weeks.
- ▲ All tunes are present to add to the effect.

70

GAMEPLAY

- ▼ Hard to control and sluggish at first.
- ▲ Still as addictive as it ever was.

80

CHALLENGE

- ▼ Similar levels get tedious after a while.
- ▲ Limitless levels mean you won't stop.

83

Okay, so this ain't exactly new, but for pure nostalgia it wins hands down.

PROSCORE 79

PROFILE

PAC-MAN ● NAMCO ● £24 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES endless
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES link-up

SUPPLIER

Console Concepts
223b Waterloo Road
Cobridge
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire ST6 2HS
© (0782) 712759

Get ready for the most violent experience you are ever likely to have. This is as close to full contact combat you are going to get without having to be admitted to hospital.

Pitfighter is the long-awaited conversion of the smash hit coin-op by Tengen. Long-standing partners in the UK, Domark, have picked up the Mega Drive version to release alongside the computer versions they are developing.

The machine could easily be a tie-in with a Jean Claude Van Damme film, something like *AWOL* perhaps. The lone fighter is surrounded by a crowd of blood-thirsty savages betting on the outcome of the fight and occasionally jumping into the pit to try to take out a fighter themselves. The fight is to the death, so it's no-holds-barred action as every part of your body is used to save your skin and kill your opponent.

Playing *Pitfighter* is pure pan-their-heads-in pleasure. Right from the title screen you get the feeling that everyone is out to get you; talk about atmosphere, even the crowd want your blood.

Graphically, *Pitfighter* is as close to the coin-op as you are likely to see. All the fighters are superbly animated and some of the moves they pull off make you wince. Just wait till you are lying on the floor in agony and some chain-wielding maniac comes up and kicks you where the sun don't shine. Very nasty.

The fighters look amazingly realistic. The fighter animation is extremely smooth, and is enhanced by the excellent 3-D effect given off by the shadows on the clothing. In fact, the



characters are better defined than the coin-op which had the tendency to look very blocky.

Sound effects on beat-'em-ups are normally limited to a few crunches for any good moves. *Pitfighter* just goes completely over the top. Every time contact is made, the bone-crunching effects kick in. Soon after the crowd join in with their boos and jeers. The crowd continue



With astounding digitised graphics and sounds, coin-op thrills and two-player simultaneous action, *Pitfighter* is the beat-'em-up to own. The range of opponents is vast and the challenge huge. Do yourself a real favour and plug yourself into this game this Christmas.

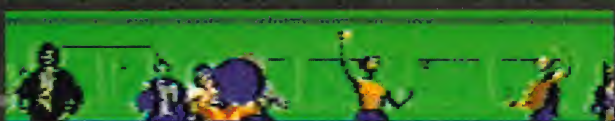


PROTIP For some serious pain-giving, make sure that when your opponent is down on the floor you kick and hit him – it is a good way of wasting his energy. Also, when you are in the car park jump up and down on the brown cars during the fight.



It may not do much for you, but trashing those cars is a great laugh.

PIT-FIGHT



their abuse when you move into their area. The music is a faithful rendi-

The intro sequence is like watching a martial arts movie, with all the fighters showing off their training techniques. You choose from three combatants - Ty, Kato and Buzz - each with their own good and bad points. This ensures that even when you've completed the game with one of the characters, there are a couple more fighters to try to guide through the tough streets of New York.



tion of the arcade machine - an American pop tune with oriental

PROFILE

PIT FIGHTER ● TENGEN ● £34.99 ● OUT JAN

CART SIZE 6Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 10
SKILL LEVELS 2
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER

Domark
 Ferry House
 51-57 Lacy Road
 Putney, London
 SW15 1PR
 ☎ (081) 7802222

just limited to the fighters in the pit, if the crowd start to get in the way you can turn your attentions to them and administer some crowd restraint. Of course your opponent may take the opportunity to come up behind you

the action is a little tame they may decide to enter the arena and have a go themselves, depending on who is their favourite fighter they may help you by hitting your opponent or they may have a go at you.

Without doubt the star feature of Pitfighter is the two player mode. You can either team up to go against the opponents or you can go against each other as well as anyone else in the ring. Although in the grudge matches and the survivor matches only one of you can win. The three fighters are all good but if want my advice don't take the ex wrestler, he's naff.

To sum up, a brilliant combat game that takes the action out of the 'glam' ninja type missions and into the heart of every fighters worst nightmare. Excellent graphics and so much game play it's scary. The coin-op was good; this is better.

● Les "pitbull" Ellis

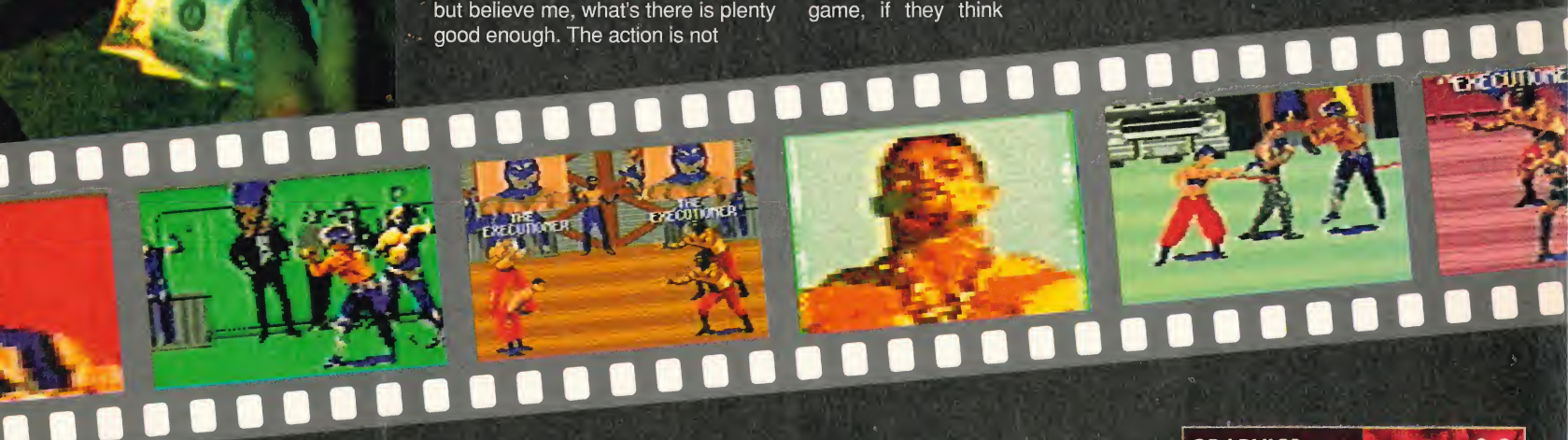


overtones.

The moves may be fairly limited compared to other combat games but believe me, what's there is plenty good enough. The action is not

and take you by surprise so watch out.

The crowd play another part in this game, if they think



FIGHTER



GRAPHICS	93
▲ Superbly animated life-like animation.	
▲ The best intro screens ever seen.	
SOUND	82
▼ The music could have been much better.	
▲ Amazing bone-crunching effects and speech.	
GAMEPLAY	96
▲ Two-player mode is a stroke of genius.	
▲ So real it makes you want to beat someone up.	
CHALLENGE	96
▲ Weapon-wielding thugs are really tough.	
▲ Very addictive - one of the best.	
The perfect coin-op conversion, and one of the best beat-'em-ups ever.	
PROSCORE	95

The time for organised sport has gone. The crowds are no longer kept happy by displays of skill, they want something that can entertain, excite and disgust all in one game. What they want is blood and guts – and lots of it! The time has come for *Powerball*, a mixture of skill, strategy and extreme psychopathic violence.

Join with players from teams like the UK Pirates or the USA Rough Riders to take on the might of the champs from the USSR (shouldn't that be the CIS now?) and China. You all compete in the world league and competition is fierce to become the world champions.

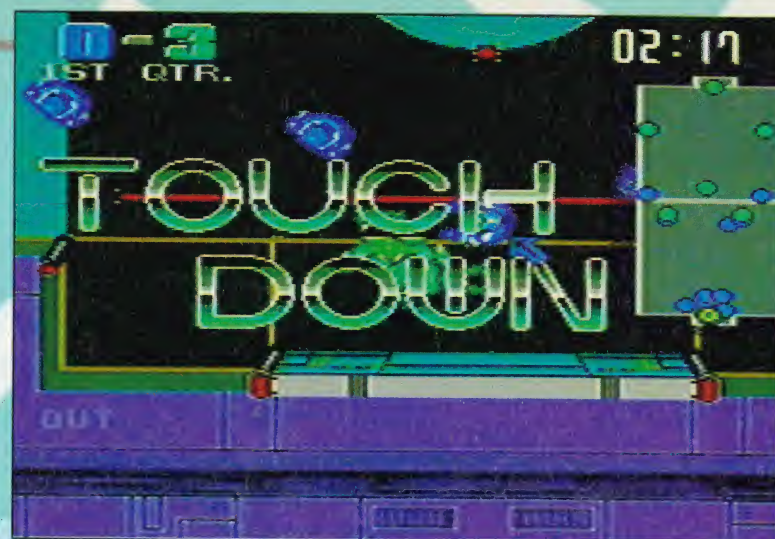
In such a competitive game, you would have thought there would be a strict code of conduct for players to adhere to, but no, anything goes. Just get the ball into the back of the goal – if anybody gets in your way, then put them in too. This ain't no game for wimps!

Games “inspired” by other games rarely meet the standards set by the original, and just one look at *Powerball* reveals this old adage to be true once more. Not only is the name similar to *Speedball* (reviewed *SEGA*PRO#10, 92%), it looks practically the same, with just a few obvious tweaks here and there to avoid any legal ramifications.

There's a promising start to the game, with a cool intro showing the teams prepping and the crowd warming up for action, but things start to go downhill when you reach the options screen. There are only three options, and with the attacking and volley kicking options making little difference, the only one you'll need is the duration of the quarters.

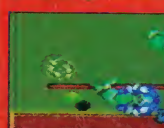
Choosing your team is your first dilemma; there are 12 to choose from as you enter either a league or exhibition match. On stepping into the arena, the first thing you notice about it is the size of the thing. If you were one of those people who thought the original *Speedball* was very restrictive, you will delight in the fact that here you can roam about to your heart's content.

In keeping with the whole game, the pitch has a futuristic, metallic sheen. In fact it is, arguably, more



On scoring, you're treated to this huge, flashing ego-booster! If you're playing a human opponent, it provides a great psychological advantage for you!

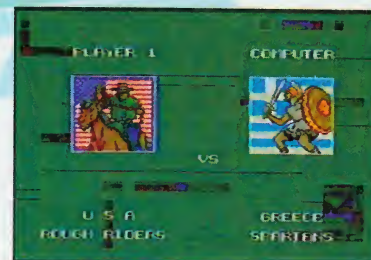
PRO TIP



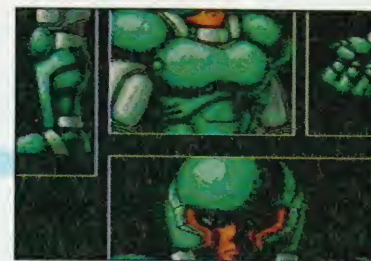
Learn to bounce the ball off the goalkeeper. If you run at him from an angle and shoot directly at him, he won't be able to catch it and the ball will be deflected into the goal.

originally detailed and coloured than the great *Speedball*.

Where *Powerball* falls over is in the rendering of the sprites. These guys are supposed to be tough, rough fighting machines, but with uniforms in garish greens, yellows and pinks, they can often look like a bunch of pansies. The colours also make the players indistinct from the ball, and



There are several teams to choose from, each with their own attributes. Read up on them before choosing!



Some of the amazing intro sequences are animated. Here's a selection of them.

you're often straining your eyes, trying to find out just which one of your players has actually got the ball.



POWER PLAYERS



Japanese Samurai – Sushi-eating rookies. They may have the speed but will they have the legs and experience to go the distance?



Korean Warriors – More used to eating dogs but their new captain, Pulveriser, will chew on the leg of any unsuspecting player he tackles.



Brazilian Amazons – They toughen up by tackling trees; that's why there is no rain forest left. A high speed team that are very, very tough.



Greek Spartans – Their captain, Jack Nasty, has just returned from injury (too many bad kebabs) and is hungry for glory and looking for blood.



USSR Cossacks – Most teams have a slice of orange at half time, these dude-skis down a bottle of vodka. Slow and tough, but very persistent.



USA Rough Riders – Have just lost all their best players to other teams with more money but McDonald's have stepped in to provide fresh meat.



UK Pirates – Led the raid against the US team and enticed the players away with offers of free fish and chips. Championship favourites this year.



Chinese Emperors – Mixing martial arts in their playing style, these guys play for keeps. Their rookie captain is looking for victory first time around.



Here's the yellow centre-forward taking his kick off. A bit of aftertouch, and it'll be way up the pitch!



The scanner comes in mega-useful for planning, amongst other things, belly-flop tackles.

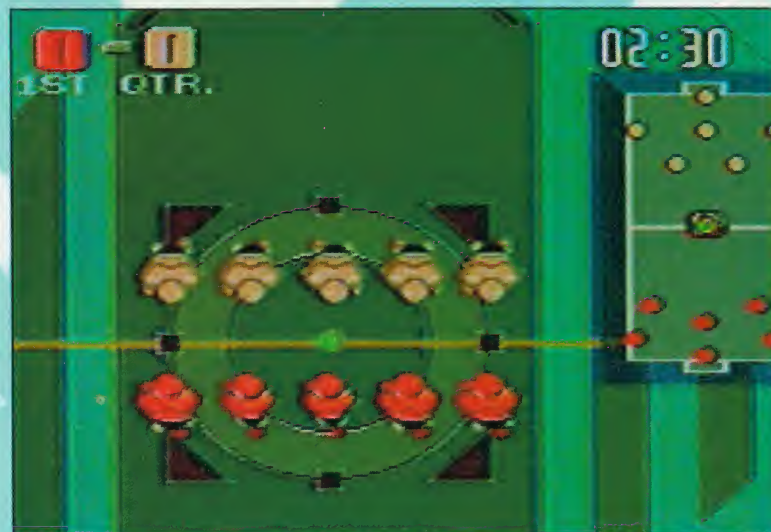
Despite the futuristic graphics, the atmosphere is diminished by the poor collision effects. You desperately need realistic collision noises in a full-contact game, but all you get is a few squeaks and beeps. Even so, the crowd seem to enjoy themselves. They happily roar away to themselves, totally engrossed with the play – you half expect them to do a Mexican wave!

Controlling your players can be very frustrating at first. The drone opponent is a tricky customer, and when you're trying to master the manual's gameplay techniques, you usually get clobbered by the ruthless computer. Your players also have this annoying habit of changing direction when you're chasing after



an opponent – which, as you can imagine, can't result in much verbal and physical discussion with the computer!

Due to the erratic gameplay, even in two-player mode you very rarely feel in total control of the action, resulting in a very disjointed game.



The pre-match hype begins here! We see Les in red, and Dave controlling the browns. Both guys know the rules so we can expect a tough match, but a fair one – NOT!

PROTALK

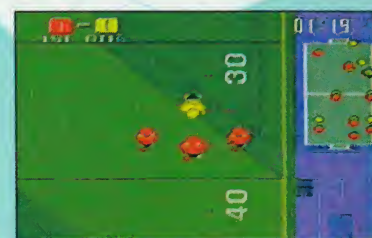
Personally, I'm not too impressed with the graphics; they are clear and distinct, but they aren't very original and the colours are really grim. Sound is also really weak and unrealistic.

I found it pretty difficult to get into, mainly because of the awkward control method, but trying to beat the very tricky computer oppo is a real challenge.

I must admit, I wouldn't have been very happy if I'd spent £35 on this.



Name: Tom Vining
From: Chantry
Age: 16
Machine: Mega Drive
Fave game: Pit-Fighter



Yellow is about to become the meat in a pressed ham sandwich, and guess who's the bread?



It's a shame that the gameplay is so poor, as the attempts at improving on the visuals of *Speedball* are creditable. Ultimately, though, if the game's not exciting, engrossing and entertaining to play, it hasn't worked. *Powerball* is frustrating, uninvolved and creates little atmosphere – neat attempt, but play it safe and stick to the real thing.

● Les "I've got the power" Ellis

GRAPHICS	74
▲ Eye catching front-end and playing area.	
▼ Let down by indistinct, gaudy players.	
SOUND	78
▲ Rough and tough music, builds atmosphere.	
▼ Effects aren't realistic or in abundance.	
GAMEPLAY	65
▼ Players are tough to keep under your control.	
▼ Constant interruptions mean disjointed play.	
CHALLENGE	75
▲ Computer teams are ruthless, making it tough.	
▼ Too frustrating to come back to.	

While the idea is sound (and someone else's!), the execution's poor.

PROSCORE 76

PROFILE

POWERBALL ● NAMCO ● £34.95 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE	4Mbit
PLAYERS	2
STAGES	n/a
SKILL LEVELS	1
FEATURES	versus, password

SUPPLIER
AMS Electronics
9 Hay Lane
Kingsbury
London
NW9 9EL
(081) 4502166



AVAILABLE IN
UK

PRO TIP Every time you cross the road, always use the Green Cross Code!



Sexy or sexist? Who knows, but *Paperboy* was one of the arcade smash hits of the Eighties. With so many of Thatcher's children out in the cold each morning, able to identify with the main character, it couldn't really fail.

For those folks who have been too busy doing their paper rounds to notice Atari Games' *Paperboy* buzzing away in the arcades (or those who missed Elite's classic computer versions), here's a quick resumé of the storyline.

Paperboy must survive a week's deliveries without coming a cropper too many times, and without losing all his customers. But don't stop and talk to strangers, especially if they offer you sweets or puppies, because this place is full of weirdos!

Having been converted to almost every format possible since its explosive birth almost ten years ago, it's about time that *Paperboy* hit the Game Gear. And, unlike some other conversions, not one sprite has been missed out. Looking back to the review of the Mega Drive version in *SEGA PRO#4*, the graphical similarity is uncanny, although a criticism of the 16-bit attempt was the almost Master System graphics. Still, it received a score of 80%, the gameplay and challenge scooping the high marks in favour of sound and graphics.

The graphics on the Gear are surprisingly good. Once past the intro static of our eponymous hero, the intricate detail level of the houses is really something to behold! The gardens have herbaceous borders that even Percy "Gardener's Choice" Thrower (sadly, now departed!) would have been proud of. Actually, the whole street is a suburban

antagonists, including chasing dogs, break-dancers, go-kart kids, big greasy bikers, and on the later

levels, grim reapers and vampires. Collision detection is pixel-perfect as the boy weaves his way through these animated hazards.

The only real grumble I have is the ease of the game. Although it won't stop you coming back for more, the levels still aren't difficult enough, even on Hard Way! Then again, who cares, because *Paperboy* remains an original idea that's still plenty playable a decade later.

● James "Sunday Times" Scullion

PAPERBOY

dream; everything is set out so neatly and tidily, it seems that, for littering, even the death penalty would be too lenient!

The tune is particularly annoying, and if it wasn't for the option to silence it, my Gear could possibly have been in several pieces by now. It's a desperate attempt at

something funky, but fails dismally, resembling a choir of ducks having their tails pulled in time to the beat. Sound effects fare rather better, although once again there just aren't enough of them. The window smash doubles up as your wipe-out noise, and another strange sound signifies that your paper projectiles have successfully reached their target, but really that's about it!

Paperboy is totally suited to the Gear, and this could possibly be the most playable version yet! A burst of speed sees the lad pedalling furiously to avoid a huge variety of classic

GRAPHICS
▲ Intricately detailed and well mapped-out.
▲ Faithful to the original in every respect! **85**

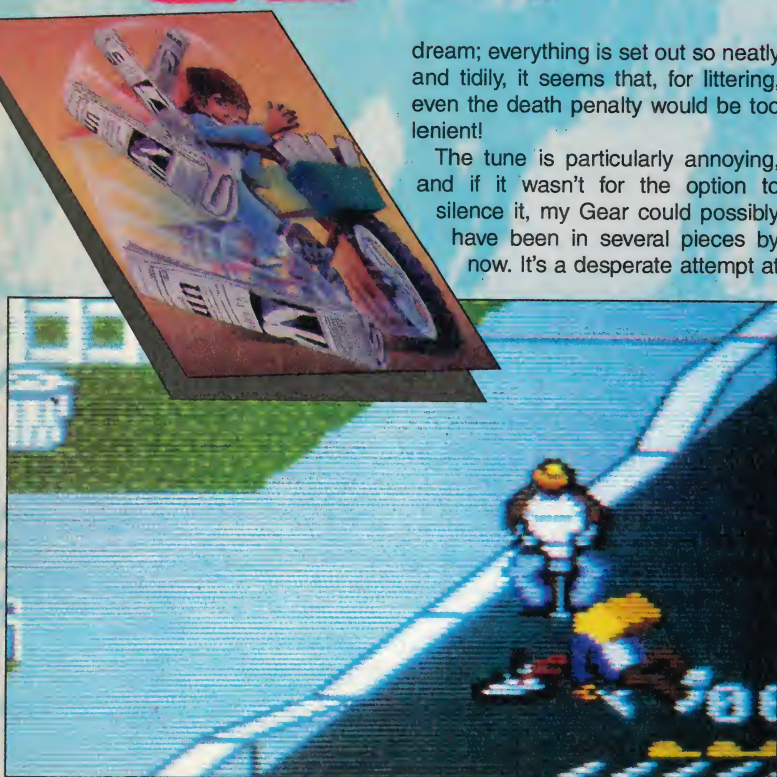
SOUND
▼ Infuriating in-game tune.
▼ Different actions have same sound effect. **38**

GAMEPLAY
▲ As amazingly playable as the original.
▲ Relax on the BMX course at the end of the day! **83**

CHALLENGE
▲ Learn your route on Easy Street.
▼ Hard Way just ain't! **77**

A bit old to be still delivering, but there's plenty of life left in him yet!
PROSCORE 79

PROFILE	PAPERBOY ● DOMARK ● £TBA ● OUT SEPT			
	CART SIZE	1Mbit	SUPPLIER	
	PLAYERS	1	Domark Software Ltd	
	STAGES	7	Ferry House	
	SKILL LEVELS	3	51-57 Lacy Road	
	FEATURES	n/a	Putney, London	
			SW15 1PR	
			(081) 7802222	





PRINCE of PERSIA



PRO TIP The sword-wielding skeletons cannot be killed in the conventional sense. To rid yourself of them, they must be manoeuvred back to the edge of a drop and swiped off!



Arggh! Our hero takes a wrong turn and ends up falling down a pit to almost certain death.

huge range of movements, including jumping, climbing up and down, running, edging forwards over precipices, ducking, fencing, and all sorts of combinations of the above. The other sprites aren't so animated, but serve their hazardous purpose. The levels are large and complex, and traversing them is a matter of opening doors by activating pressure pads (which could be several screens from the required door!). Torches flicker in the breeze as they light your fated way! Roofs and floors collapse, and spikes scythe up from the floor in an attempt to impale you, and if that weren't enough, a drop of more than two floors results in you dying in a crumpled heap!

The sound is suitably Middle Eastern, and is reminiscent of the hypnotic, swirling music emanating from the Casbah on bazaar day, or perhaps a snake charmer's pipe. Vaguely menacing, but full of Eastern Promise! Sound FX are plentiful and include the noise made by doors opening and closing, things hitting the ground (including you!), and the clash of steel as you fight to survive!



After just entering level five, you quickly survey the area. Nothing in sight, so it's safe to proceed.

An energy bar shows your health. Beginning with three units, this can be boosted up to double that, but is easily reduced by a long drop, or the kiss of tempered steel. Drop too far and you're, quite simply, dead meat! But you've unlimited lives, as long as the hourglass keeps running, so don't waste time! You'll be surprised how rapidly an hour slips by!

Prince of Persia could be the most perfect thing to emerge on the Game Gear in a long time! The thinking man's Manic Miner, a real game for the Nineties!

● James "Ali Baba" Scullion

The Grand Vizier, a rotten sexual deviant, has kidnapped the beautiful princess, and it's up to you to rescue her, in a struggle against the odds! Time is ticking away. In fact you've only got an hour until the unthinkable occurs!

The three sections - the dungeons, the palace, and finally the tower - are all heavily booby-trapped! You must find your way around, avoiding self-destruction, and engaging the Vizier's guards in swashbuckling sword combat, before the Princess is savagely ravaged! The nearer to her you get, the more treacherous the traps that await your carcass, so you'll have to tread very carefully! The Vizier is also a Master of the Black Arts, and has summoned invincible skeletal warriors to skewer you. This ain't gonna be no picnic!

Striking is the first word that comes to mind when playing Prince of Persia! The character animation is absolutely stunning! Apparently, it was all programmed by a guy named Jordan Mechner, working from movie footage! (Jordan's no stranger to the computer world; he was responsible for the highly-acclaimed Karateka!) This process of movie-to-graphics breaks new ground in creating uncannily realistic animation sequences.

The main sprite (our hero) has a

PRO TIP The spikes in the ground may be avoided by jumping straight up in the air. By doing this, you edge forwards without coming to any grief!

PROFILE

PRINCE OF PERSIA ● DOMARK ● £27.99 ● OUT SEPT

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 13
SKILL LEVELS 9
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
Domark Software
Ferry House
51-57 Lacy Road
Putney, London
SW15 1PR
(081) 7802222

GRAPHICS ▲ Best character animation to be seen on the GGE! ▲ Lovely Eastern scenery.	96
SOUND ▲ "Rock the Casbah, rock the Casbah!" ▲ Effects are intelligent and varied.	93
GAMEPLAY ▲ Get your swashes buckled, quick! ▲ Danger always! Long falls can kill!	95
CHALLENGE ▲ The further you go, the tougher she gets! ▲ Skeletal guards are invincible!	95

What a cracker. A real Turkish delight!

PROSCORE 95

PUTT & PUTTER

Nick Faldo wouldn't be seen dead playing this game, as he's a "serious" pro. Anyone else, however, could have a great deal of fun. *Putt & Putter* is a cross between your local golfing greens and Pinball Wizard.

Pilot your ball through 18 treacherously zany (oops!) greens, against either an opponent or the course par. Hazards galore await the unsuspecting victim in this humorous look at a golfer's nightmare, not to mention the fact that you're surrounded by water! Yes, you're playing golf way out in the middle of some ocean or other, and if that wasn't bizarre enough, you're not getting off until you've completed the full 18 holes. So get like James's car, and putt, putt, putt!

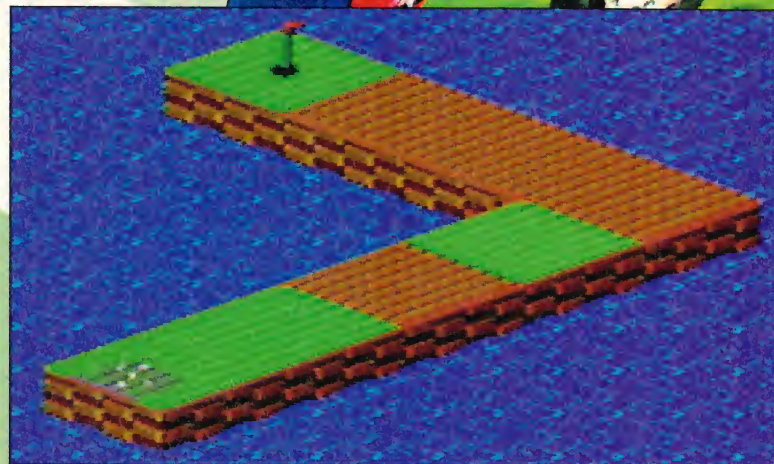
Putt & Putter, while not being the most original concept (we've seen it all before in *Zany Golf* on the Mega Drive), certainly is a novel game for the Master System. There's no real storyline to speak of, instead content yourself with the fact that here sits an extremely entertaining 8-bit game!

Quality runs high throughout *Putt & Putter*. The graphics have been skillfully designed, and wouldn't look out of place on a Mega Drive! Colour, too, is bold and brash, and ties in well with the golfing scenario. The waves lap hungrily at the shores of each green, longing for that little white ball to join them! The ball is controlled using two devices: firstly you choose which direction to send it in via a flashing line radiating outwards from the ball, and once done, a power meter appears which must be stopped at the right percentage for an accurate shot. This combination of methods works supremely well, although the power bar is slightly temperamental.

The sound is extremely well thought-out. A pleasant tune plays throughout, accompanied by suitably happy and sad birdie and bogie tunes. FX are plentiful and include such wacky greats as the pinball

bumper noise, power bar pitch-rise, and the totally satisfying sunken-ball sound. These all add to the fun immeasurably, as playing without them rapidly proved.

Obstacles galore bar your path, and you must find ways over, under and around them. The earlier levels are extremely friendly in that they teach you,



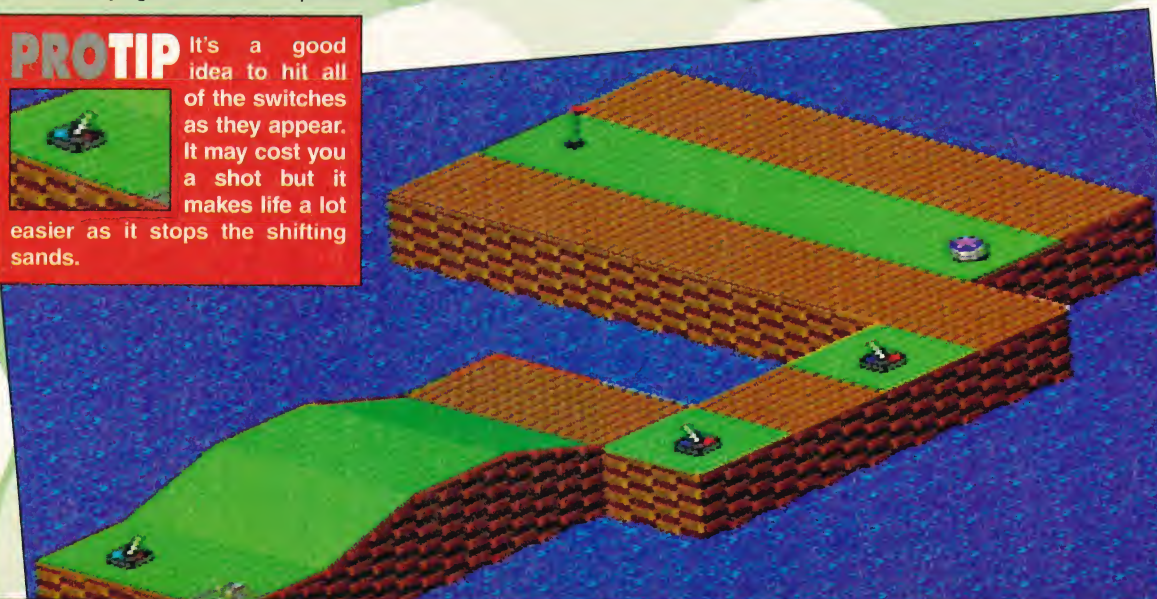
No problem, man. This is one of the first levels you'll encounter. All you've got to watch out for is the moving brown surface, which will drag your ball out to sea! Just smack it at full power.



PRO TIP It's a good idea to hit all of the switches as they appear. It may cost you a shot but it makes life a lot easier as it stops the shifting sands.



easier as it stops the shifting sands.





holes!

Aimed more at the younger gamer/golf fan more than the likes of a hardcore PGA zealot, *Putt & Putter* is almost a faultless crazy golf sim! You'll be back for more, I can assure you!

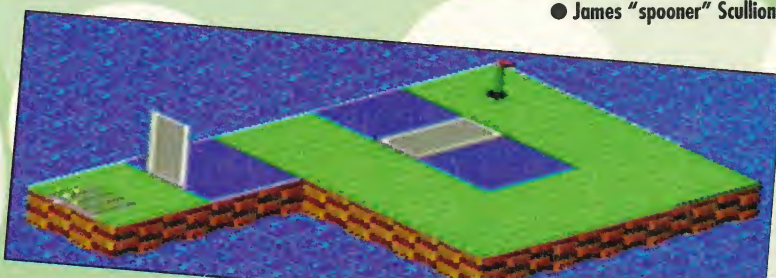
● James "spooner" Scullion

PROTALK

This kind of game doesn't rely too heavily on graphics, but a nice job has been done on them. The sound is innocuous enough, but rather nondescript. You'll get the hang of it really quickly, but I suspect you'll complete it rather soon too. Until you do, though, it's addictive stuff.



Name: Steven North
From: Oldfield Park
Age: 16
Machine: Mega Drive
Fave game: EA Hockey

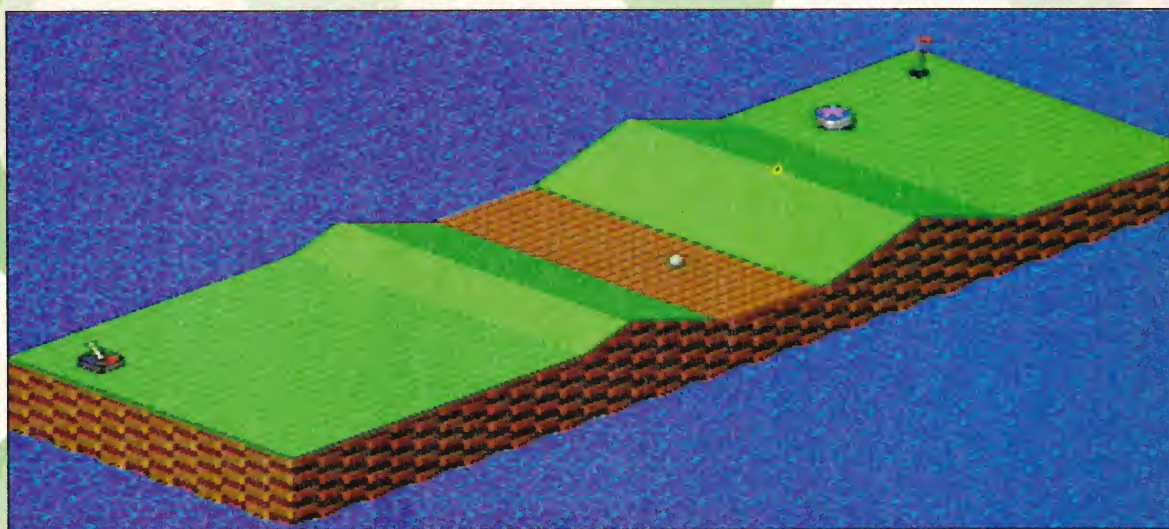


PROFILE	PUTT & PUTTER	● SEGA ●	£32.99	● OUT NOW
	CART SIZE	2Mbit		
	PLAYERS	2		
	STAGES	8		
	SKILL LEVELS	3		
	FEATURES	versus		
	SUPPLIER	AMS Electronic Games Hay Lane Kingsbury London NW9 9EL (081) 4502166		

in effect, what to expect on the later levels. Obstructions include the water (obviously!), the obligatory pinball bumpers, treadmills that'll drag you off the course, switches (to turn those dratted treadmills off!), all sorts of bridges, and warps, which may or may not be helpful! You begin with five lives, and each birdie or bogey adds or subtracts one from these. You'll amass a fair few lives over the first couple of levels, then they'll slowly dwindle away as time goes by. I'm not kidding, some of these holes are devilishly tough, and you'll be hard pressed to see the later of the 18

GOLF GEAR

Game Gear owners be patient. Your very own hand-held version of *Putt & Putter* is on the way. If you really can't wait, then be prepared for extremely small balls and even smaller direction indicators, sprites, etc.



(Below) Warp tunnels are, in most cases, very useful, helping you to get somewhere previously impassable. But beware, some are red herrings, and will leave you stranded!

(Above) Welcome to the whoop-de-do hole! To halt the escalator, hit the switch, but try to avoid the pinball bumper, as it'll send you flying back to the start. Not as easy as it seems!



GRAPHICS	88
▲ Clarity is remarkably high.	
▲ Well designed levels.	
SOUND	87
▲ Cheerful tune throughout.	
▲ Lunate noises accompany gameplay.	
GAMEPLAY	86
▲ Extremely user-friendly.	
▲ Two-player is super fun!	
CHALLENGE	85
▲ Splendid difficulty curve.	
▲ Now, now, calm down!	
Move over <i>Golfmania</i> , <i>Putt & Putter</i> is two holes ahead.	
PROSCORE	86





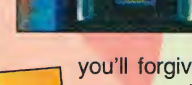
Waaaak! Donald leapt back in surprise as a frayed piece of parchment fell out of the old book in Uncle Scrooge's library. Gingerly examining the scrap, Donald realised it was the long lost map of King Garuzia who once ruled duck kingdom. Now clumsy Donald must leave his precious Daisy and embark on a dangerous quest across the globe in search of the treasure. Okay, so it isn't the most original and compelling plot line but you have got to admire Donald's spirit. Our frantic feathered friend must recover the booty before big bad Pete and his ducky gang can swipe it. With the help of Hewy, Dewey and Louie who pilot the plane, Donald has to drop in on different parts of the world, solve the riddles and get the clues to the hidden island. With only a short time to complete the adventure, it's Challenge Donald! (Although he doesn't have as good a figure as Anneka Rice.)



I groaned when *Quackshot* flopped through the letterbox. Not because I am against ducks dressed in khaki shorts having adventures, purely because it's a cartoon licence and the last one I reviewed, *The Flintstones*, was a massive disappointment. For all you Donald Duck fans waiting with baited breath, you needn't worry, *Quackshot* is everything a cartoon game should be and more. From the moment a match is scratched and the gloomy cavern is lit up in the colourful introduction, you know a treat is in store.

Cute is a word I despise, but that's the only way to describe the graphics throughout the game. Donald is exactly as you see him on celluloid and at times it is hard to distinguish the two. *Quackshot* has without doubt some of the best graphics around. From the unbearably hot South America to the dark and scary woods shrouded in mist in deepest Transylvania, the sprites and backgrounds are consistently excellent. The map is straight out of a Spielberg fantasy and the team even fly across it, blatantly ripping off the films.

Donald is amazingly lively and looks more like Indiana Jones than Indy ever did! I loved the way he could slide along the floor, his cowering duck (if



QUACKSHOT

KING SHIP



SEGA pro

YO!

Quackshot will be released officially in December but why wait till Sega design to give it to the British public, you can get it right now from Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759. Their price is just six pounds less than the "official" one, £34.

PROTALK Absolutely brilliant graphics: loads of totally different levels, cartoon-like animation, colourful and detailed. The music isn't bad either – the tunes are atmospheric and effects appropriate. It's one of the best games I've played! Buy it and believe it!

Name SIMON MISRA
From WIGAN
Age 14
Fave game SHINOBI
Machine owned MEGA DRIVE



16-BIT CARTRIDGE
FOR USE WITH THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

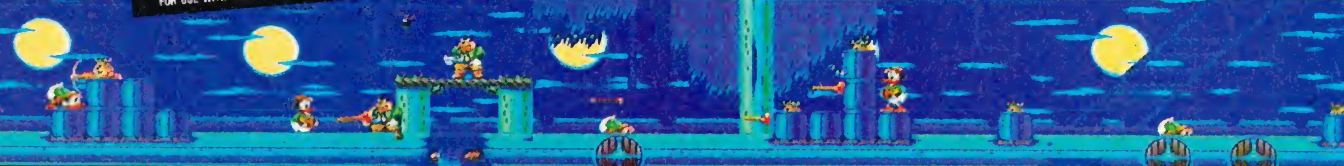
SEGA

you'll forgive the pun) and the way his plunger gun jerks in his hand when it fires. You can also get him to do a fantastic temper attack where the normally passive Donald emits an angry quack and becomes

a flurry of spinning fists. Like Sonic, Donald performs a series of moves when left alone such as tapping his foot, winking

and wiggling his tail feathers, and although hardly original this is characteristic of Donald's impatient nature.

Donald turns into a ghostbuster on the Viking tower. After busting all the ghosts it turns out that the Viking King is a compulsive liar and doesn't even have the bloody diary in the first place.





Each character is meticulously detailed and all of Donald's old friends, such as Goofy and the

itself. The plane that swoops from above to rescue you, the map and the oodles of exploration really do create an atmosphere of pioneering the unknown and this is one of *Quackshot*'s strongest assets.

Quackshot is also crammed with traps and puzzles to tax even The Times crossword mind. Originality

to solve a puzzle to stop a lowering ceiling, grab the sceptre of Ra, then clamber down a ladder that snapped and dropped me into a mine car for a



hectic rollercoaster ride of death. Even if the ideas are not original, the way they are strung together to accelerate the pace to overload is nothing

GRAPHICS	98
▲ Jet's face is, breath-taking.	
▲ Smooth animation and parallax.	
SOUND	90
▲ Heroic anthems and lindy riffs.	
▲ Cartoonish effects.	
GAMEPLAY	95
▲ Astounding adventure story.	
▲ Originality puts others to shame.	
CHALLENGE	85
▲ A quest and a half to complete.	
▲ Possibly too many continues.	
The most fun you can have with a duck without stuffing it.	
PROSCORE	95

Donald can be hard to control in a sticky situation, and the way some levels can be incredibly difficult in places. Be warned, the puzzles are not always obvious and it will take some experimenting to pull through.

PRO TIP You need the explosive bubble gum shots from Gear-loose to blow up the walls in Transylvania. This allows you to get the real map from Dracula.

I was also dubious of the number of credits; unlimited may make the game seem easy, but you will still need considerable skill to reach the treasure island.

There is enough variety in places as diverse as the South Pole (with its penguins) and Egypt (amongst the pyramids) to keep most adventurers occupied for weeks. Younger players will instantly be enthralled by Donald's quest and how similar to the films and cartoon it really is. This game will appeal to all ages, and all abilities. Like *Castle of Illusion*, it is an essential purchase.

● Damian "out for a duck" Butt

PRO TIP The Maharaja wants you to kill the tiger in the Maze. It can only be hurt in the air. The Sphinx's tear is used to open the tomb in Egypt.

features highly in the fiendish construction of the many pitfalls Donald has to face. There were times when a suspicious rumbling

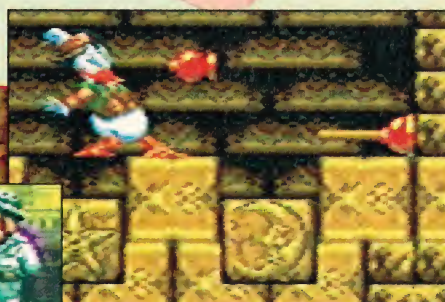


proved to be the walls of a chamber closing together to crush me. I was also caught out by collapsing bridges and rolling balls of fire in tiny passages.

But what impressed me the most when I played *Quackshot* was the authenticity of the situations, particularly in the Egyptian tomb. First I had

short of breath-taking.

At first I was dismayed to see only three levels, but thankfully the whole world opened up as information was gleaned and different maps discovered. My only gripes lie in the way



PROFILE	QUACKSHOT	SEGA US	£39.95	OUT NOW
	CART SIZE	8Mbit		
	PLAYERS	1		
	STAGES	10		
	SKILL LEVELS	1		
	FEATURES	n/a		
	SUPPLIER			
	Sega Europe			
	16 Portland Place			
	London			
	W11 4LA			
	☎ (071) 7278070			

triplets, are all recreated to make this a cartoon extravaganza. The enemies are equally cartoonish with the dogs carrying guns, the boxing turtles and the mystical snake charmers being my favourites.

Every aspect of *Quackshot* has been polished until it shines; the dazzling graphics complement the well animated and facile sprites, creating a world that is totally realistic within



BOOM! The roar of the cannons is all that can be heard as your castle crumbles into dust. Your opponent across the river laughs as his mighty guns rain down, decimating the other isle.

Your puny weapons have only scratched his walls, certainly not enough to warrant rebuilding. Maybe you should try a Skud? As you evacuate the ruins, your eyes seethe with anger and you vow revenge.

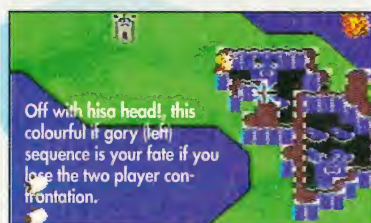
After a dodgy period in the arcades, which left many wandering if their ten pence had been well spent, *Rampart* builds its walls around the humble Master System. The idea is incredibly simple: find a castle, place your cannons and blast him before he blasts you.

With *Rampart* representing Domark's first Tengen Europe conversion, expectations are high. The question is whether or not *Rampart* will set the standard for further releases on this label?



As with all addictive puzzle games, the key is gameplay and not what hits you between the eyes and ears. Previous brain teasers such as *Klax*, *Blockout* and *Columns* all relied on fiendish ideas to carry the game, *Rampart* hopes to do the same. The concept of one-on-one destruction is instantly appealing and will bring out the sadist in everyone. But *Rampart* also draws on popular tried-and-tested techniques, such as the rebuilding sequence that has you fitting shapes into corresponding holes.

The front end is good but not



overly polished, which was disappointing. With the extra memory that must have been saved on graphics, the initial impression could have been improved significantly. Instead, all you are given is a plain title screen and sparse options that do not do the game justice.



After destruction, creation. This section has you fitting multi-shaped walls into the holes made by the enemy.

The action is fast and fun, but lacks the nail-biting pace of its



The cannon balls are only seconds behind as each commander aims his reticle over the opposing walls. Two explosions rock the blues castle (above). The real trick is to knock out key areas such as corners to hinder rebuilding.

GRAPHICS	58
▲ Detailed cannons and explosions.	
▲ Blocky and repetitive with no title screen.	
SOUND	23
▲ Dire effects.	
▲ No tune or hearty anthems.	
GAMEPLAY	85
▲ Infuriatingly addictive.	
▲ Sadistic in the extreme.	
CHALLENGE	82
▲ Guaranteed panic every game.	
▲ Action gets repetitive in one-player.	
An instantly appealing conversion, and hopefully a sign of things to come from Domark.	
PROSCORE	81



excels. All the action of the original has been expertly captured to provide a game with long-lasting appeal and constant competition. The tension is heightened by the shortage of space in which to build and the strict time limit. This is the essence of *Rampart*'s gameplay and it is also

RAMPART

PROFILE	RAMPART ● TENGEN ● £29.99 ● OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit
PLAYERS	2
STAGES	10
SKILL LEVELS	3
FEATURES	teampay
	SUPPLIER
	Domark Software
	Ferry House
	51-57 Lacy Road
	Putney
	London SW15 1PR
	☎ (081) 7802222

cabinet counterpart. The loss of the trackball means the cursor crawls sluggishly across the screen in order to aim the cannons. The whole point of the ball was so that the fastest hand could draw first blood. Unless one player has sudden paralysis, you both have the same chance and this is not very satisfying because it makes the game seem slower than it actually is.

In two-player mode, *Rampart*

what makes it so enjoyable.

With average graphics and severely limited sonics, *Rampart* won't win best-looking game. However, this deceptive facade hides addictive gameplay that will keep you coming back for more.

● Damian "breach" Butt

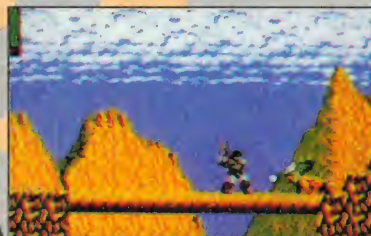
PROTIP In one-player mode, shoot the fire ships first as they do the most damage. In two-player, try to take out single sections close to corners or up against the water as it makes rebuilding a real bind and wastes the enemy's time.





JAPAN

RASTAN SAGA



These items improve Rastan's fighting skills and provide points bonuses. The ring is the least effective followed by the staff and finally the cloak. The effects only last a short while, so pick up everything.



The axe, brain-biter, is fast and deadly. One swipe kills all.

The mace is less powerful but affords a longer reach.

Excaliber lets you burn enemies at a distance. Nice!



A health potion replenishes Rastan's flagging energy.

The fuller the bottle, the more good it does Rastan.

Beware of poison, it can take what little life you have left.



Shield, cloak and armour will protect Rastan. For a limited time our hero will be impervious to hostile blades and venom. Particularly useful against the level guardians.

No flash intro, no options, just one massive mythical romp through 18 levels of medieval mayhem. The game's façade is a particularly deceptive one as it hides what is possibly the best arcade adventure on the Game Gear so far.

PROTIP To break the floor rocks, jump high, push down and press fire.

To kill the lion on level one, stand above it and keep thrusting downwards as it passes. The flaming sword is by far the best weapon followed by the axe. Jumping whilst pressing up and fire increases your reach.

Watch the demo for clues on where to go and what to pick up.

Your game starts in impressive fashion, with the sword-wielding hero dropping from the skies into the action. Behind him runs an impres-



A huge snarling lion lunges at your flesh intent on dismembering you. The level one guardian is easy to defeat once a system has been established.

sive range of backgrounds, from snow and ice to fire and brimstone, each with atmospheric hazards such as icicles, rivers of flames and snakes.

The sprites make the most of the Gear's colour capacity with attractive montages forming the backgrounds. The main character sprite is also incredibly facile and smooth. Sound is superb, with some of the best

Whooh, don't fall, it's a long way down. Our agile barbarian finds tackling treacherous logs over bottomless caverns all in a day's work.

tunes and effects I've ever heard on the GG. The level tunes are quest-like with high and low points reflecting where you are. For example, fanfares accompany you in the wilderness but down in the ice caves the music is eerie.

Speed is very important in *Rastan Saga* and it is surprising the difference in completion time of rounds. The first section can be finished in

less than 30 seconds, while the sixth is a much longer, arduous task. This is an essential quality because after



Pausing for thought by an open archway, Rastan contemplates the horrors ahead in this bleak castle on level two.

getting so far, you want to get back to the higher levels as quickly as possible. Luckily, the seven continues start you at the beginning of your present round.

Rastan Saga should keep the average gamer's player entertained

The time for talking is over. Compromise is no longer an option. They've pushed you too far this time, and now they're going to pay for it. The thugs, dweebs, nasal brains and ball-scratchers are running riot in the world of Semia, crushing all folk that stand in their way. While on the rampage, they happened to bump into the virgin princess of the kingdom, and with an enormous reputation for evil deeds, the geeks have kidnapped her and thrown her in the castle dungeons.

Luckily for the princess, you've always had a bit of a thing for her, so you wrap on your loin cloth, grab the nearest sword and set off on a treacherous journey to the kingdom's castle. But the path you must take is not a simple one. Along the trail are untold horrors which the wastoids have dispatched to hinder you. Ready to slash?

PROFILE	RASTAN SAGA	TAITO	£24	IMPORT
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	18			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	n/a			
				SUPPLIER
				Console Concepts
				223b Waterloo Road
				Cobridge
				Stoke-on-Trent
				Staffordshire ST6 2HS
				(0782) 712759

and compelled for quite some time. With 18 rounds of great graphics, impressive sound and a difficulty setting that's spot on, it's just a shame Sega haven't picked this up for an official release.

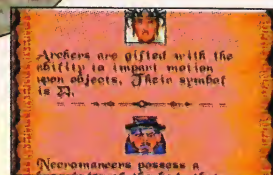
● Damian Butt

GRAPHICS	88
Some small sprites are hard to distinguish.	
Very smooth scrolling at a fast rate.	
SOUND	90
Large range of excellent effects.	
The atmospheric tunes are a delight to hear.	
GAMEPLAY	85
Exciting and frantic action throughout.	
The many moves are easily executed.	
CHALLENGE	81
Guardians are a little weak and feeble.	
Enough locations to test the hardest barbarian.	
It's heartening to see an old nut like <i>Rastan Saga</i> giving a breath of fresh air to the GG.	
PROSCORE	86





Buc is dwarfed by a particularly vicious Wyvern. Your only form of attack is a Stun spell so start reciting or it's brown trousers time.



With such a magical title, you would hardly expect this game to be about a professional hoola hoop champion, but, remarkably, it is. You play an ambitious sorcery student, Buc, whose master was brutally slain by a corrupted pupil working for the dark side of the force.

Your task is to recover the 11 Rings of Power lost when the rod of creation was broken by two warring gods, Nexus (good) and Void (bad), and avenge your mentor's death. Followers of both religions hid the rings from memory and now it's up to Buc to build a party, find the rings and finally banish Void once and for all.

Remember, the world is a big place, don't trust anyone and search everything for clues. May the Swartz be with you.

RINGS OF POWER

could not even begin to describe how many locations or situations are open to you as your quest in *Rings of Power* unfolds – and this is a feature almost unheard of nowadays. I have to be honest, at first I hated *Rings* due to some initial control problems and its genuinely high difficulty level – this is not a game for arcadesters. However, once I had completed the first task and visited a few cities, I was fascinated by the intricate plot lines and manipulative characters.

The intro is stunning, with some superb parallax logos and a well-drawn hobbit character. Surprisingly, the sprites are of a low quality compared to other "visual" adventures, but everything fits into the Lilliput land-

scape perfectly. The perspective is very *Populous* but don't be put off, this has bags more playability.

My main gripe with *Rings of Power* is that it is much too easy to die. Apart from the ludicrous odds when fighting bandits, you have to contend with starvation and countless other follies. What I found laughable was the way the manual explains in detail about magic and history, but nothing about elementary functions such as eating or climbing ladders.

PRO TIP



Two things are vital, gold and health (just like real life), so you must top up both at every occa-

sion. Remember to search every room with the search option and open every chest. When attacking the grumpy old hermit near the city, always have full strength or it's curtains.

Two shots from later in the game: the enchanter's guild (left) is a place where spells can be learnt. The sewers (below) hold some vital information for Buc's quest.



The vehicle master from whom you can hire a flying dragon, a dinosaur or a ship. If you have the dosh.

What a useful feature, a help option shows what to press and when.

Various guilds provide you with information and spiritual guidance.



Hidden behind this tree is the church where an informant waits in the confessional.

Your status scroll occasionally informs you of the bleedin' obvious.

Your ship awaits m'lord. Not only does supporting a crew deplete your food and water but pirates are widespread and mutiny is common.



What is so impressive is the sheer scale: the map is huge and with so many people to interact with, you are never short of clues or



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Very detailed with impressive titles.
- ▼ Fight sprites appear blocky and unkempt.

SOUND

- ▲ A vast array of classical tunes.
- ▼ They become grating after a time though.

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ A wealth of tasks and objectives.
- ▼ Odd controls and some collision flaws.

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Enormous landscape.
- ▲ Every city has a new problem.

Full of depth and challenge but let down by high mortality rate.

PROSCORE

79

PROFILE

RINGS OF POWER ● EA ● £49.95 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 1000s
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES back-up

SUPPLIER
Electronic Arts
Langeley Business Centre
11-49 Station Road
Langeley, Nr Slough
Berkshire SL3 8YN
(0753) 549442



information. Like *Populous*, *Rings of Power* may become repetitive after a while but with battery back-up you can always rejoin your adventure later on. *Rings of Power* is a superb RPG full of intrigue and cunning that will totally absorb any sleuth-minded person for months.

● Damian "Gulliver" Butt

M has taken over the Dark Zone. No, not the guy who always gives James Bond his instructions, but the vicious boss of the Soldiers of Darkness who have taken over and are slaughtering the innocent people around them.

Word of this atrocity reached a Sergeant Brody who bravely ventured into the Dark Zone. But even his bravery was not enough, and a few days later, his partner, Detective Sergeant Gray found his bullet-ridden carcass on the city's outskirts. It was then that Gray vowed to enter the Dark Zone and avenge his friend's death. His only target, M, the perpetrator of these evil deeds. Will you bother to help out the poor man?



Running Battle bashed through the doors and onto our desk from TV Games, 11 Castle Parade, Ewell By-Pass, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2PR. Tel: (081) 7867816. They're asking £29.99 for the pleasure of its company.

RUNNING BATTLE



After the success of beat-'em-ups like *Streets of Rage* on the Mega Drive, the Master System really needs a good fighting game and I hoped this would be it. Initially, it looks as though this could be the answer but first impressions can be misleading.

The main characters are little more than coloured blobs, becoming a mass of pixels in close combat. The levels look very impressive as you progress from city streets to warehouses to ships and the backgrounds scroll smoothly along. There is a lot of detail in the street level, but I can't help feeling that someone at Sega

added to the action, but there's nothing like this in *Running Battle*. Donald Duck proved that you can have loads of really good music as well as good graphics, but this is definitely a step backwards. The tune must contain all of four notes and within a few seconds will have you reaching for that volume control. Don't worry about turning the sound off completely because the effects won't be missed either.



It's high noon and time for the showdown with Billy the Kid. Keep plugging at his heart for victory.

Any beat-'em-up is effective if it can successfully make you feel as if you have some control over your destiny. If you spend half your time getting frustrated with the control

has a slight ego problem: how many streets do you walk through where "Sega" is spray-painted all over the walls?

The music in *Streets of Rage* really



PROFILE	RUNNING BATTLE	SEGA	£29.99	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	5			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	n/a			
		SUPPLIER		
		Sega UK		
		16 Portland Road		
		London		
		W11 4LA		
		(071) 7278070		

method and complaining about dodgy collision detection, then it clearly isn't any fun to play. This is the case with *Running Battle*. There's no enjoyment to be had here.

● Les "Brody" Ellis

GRAPHICS	65
▲ Large levels; good use of colour.	
▼ Terrible sprites are indistinct.	
SOUND	48
▼ Turn that music off.	
▼ Turn those effects off.	
GAMEPLAY	68
▲ Change of weapons adds variety.	
▼ Lousy collision detection.	
CHALLENGE	79
▲ Large levels will take ages to complete.	
▼ No real control over your destiny.	
The Master System is still without a great beat-'em-up.	
PROSCORE	66

Darius is in deep trouble. The planet has been attacked suddenly and without mercy. With little defences, bar a battleship called Silverhawk, the Darians are in trouble.

The Silverhawk will be the key to their defence, and with crew members like Proco and Tiat Young at the helm Darius could be saved. The Silverhawk, which is currently on a peace mission, now has to travel back across the solar system to the aid of Darius.

The invaders' attack force is spread out across 12 zones and the only way through is to take them all on. With hundreds of ships in the enemy's arsenal, and an unlimited supply of bullets in their munitions dump, it ain't gonna be easy. But, hey, if anyone can do it, you can.



Extra special thanks go to TV Games, 11 Castle Parade, Ewell By-pass, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2PR. Tel: (081) 7867816. Good old Jason "17-4" Henton took a break from being thrashed at EA Hockey to pop this little "beauty" in the post to us. Cheers, Jase, don't call us, eh?

SAGAIA



It is safe to say that this game will never appear in the ProGuide to Shoot-'em-ups. A diabolical rip-off is putting it too lightly. Shoot-'em-ups need some pumping sound, eye-pleasing graphics and well-hard blasting gameplay. *Sagaia* has none of the above.

The graphics, with the exception of the guardians, are on the small side with very little detail. Things get real bad when there are loads of alien ships onscreen as it's very tough to distinguish them from the bullets.

Sagaia also suffers badly from



Luckily, you saved your shield till the end of level one and now have the odds in your favour against this pink monstrosity. But he's got a trick up his sleeve... Once you think you've killed him, the screen flips around and he starts to attack you from behind.



screen flicker. You will notice as you are progressing through the levels that the enemy have a nasty habit of blinking out of existence and then returning just in time to kill you. This is very annoying and smacks of lazy Sega playtesters. The level guardians are big – in some cases very big – but are too bland with little colour.

As far as music goes, I think someone must have forgotten to put some

in. You get a brief six note riff at the start of the game and that's yer lot. Even the Master System can manage more than that; it's just lazy programming as far as I'm concerned.

The sound effects while you are blasting away are limited to a few beeps and pings. What is wrong with putting some nice explosions in there? You get much more satisfaction from a massive explosion when

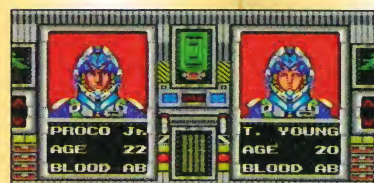


While there are many power-ups in *Sagaia*, they are also pretty easy to come across. Here you are equipped with vertical firing, which is ideal for this level as monsters come out of the ceiling to gobble up your ship. Standard arms include a forward firing turret and bombs.



SAGAIA GEAR

While the graphics of a MS game on the smaller GG screen always look better, they can also suffer from their compact nature. The main game is still as playable, but when you fly over complex backgrounds, the enemy's bullets are very hard to see. The planet selection screen is impossible to make out.



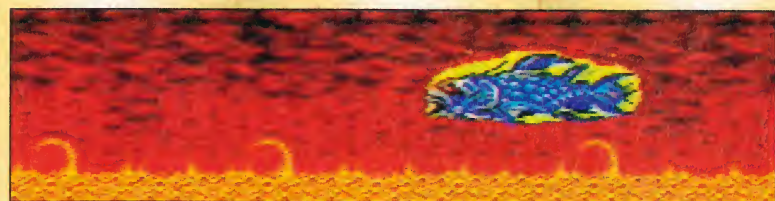
The two brave pilots must fly the Silverhawk back to Darius to save the planet.



Here you have picked up the all-important shield on Zone C. Logically, this shield can only take a certain amount of hits. Therefore, even with this you should still be avoiding bullets and saving your shield for the end-of-level confrontation – not that you'll need it as the guardians are really easy.



At the completion of each level, you are able to choose which planet you fly to next.



you shoot something than you do from a hail of pixels onscreen.

All these deficiencies could be forgiven if the gameplay was up to scratch, but it isn't. Initially, *Sagaia* is quite playable as you zip through blasting anything that gets in your way. Then the screen flicker cuts in and you start to die needlessly. The levels are pretty short and dead easy to get through. The challenge doesn't

start to kick in until the end of level five, by which stage it is too late because you are at the culmination of the game.

The level guardians are the easiest and slowest I have ever come across. Their firing patterns are sluggish and so predictable. You will find that after a warm up game you very rarely lose a life on the level guardians. The skill factor may well

be aimed at younger players but it is still far too easy. Once you start powering up your ship – which doesn't take long – it soon spells destruction for the enemy.

When compared to the likes of *Xenon II*, *Sagaia* pales into insignificance. There is not enough challenge to keep you coming back for more. It's slow, sad to look at and even sadder to listen to. What a sad game...

● Les "sad man" Ellis

PRO TIP



Every so often this craft will appear. When it does, concentrate all your fire power on it when it blows up, all the enemy craft will be destroyed giving you a brief respite from their pale onslaught.

GRAPHICS

- ▼ Small characters and very bad screen flicker.
- ▼ Not enough variety in the aliens; little colour.

41

SOUND

- ▼ No music whatsoever, even on the title screen.
- ▼ The sound effects are terrible.

08

GAMEPLAY

- ▼ Easy to pick up.
- ▼ Glitches and boredom soon take over.

22

CHALLENGE

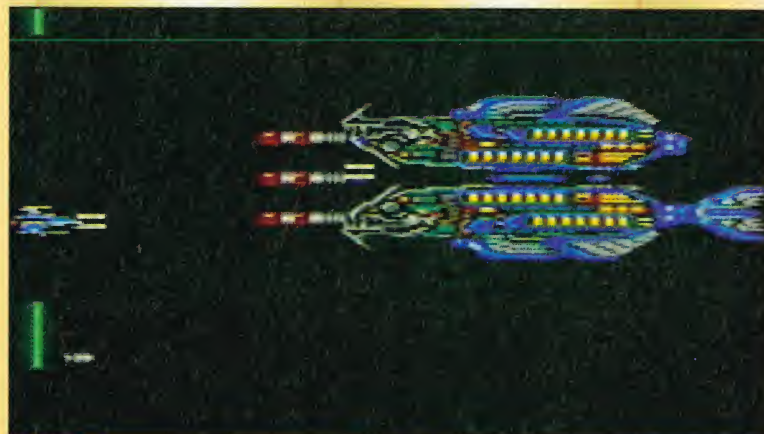
- ▼ Short and easy levels offer little challenge.
- ▼ The guardians are no trouble.

30

This rates as one of the worst Master System games for a long time.

PROSCORE 23

PROFILE	SAGAIA ● TAITO ● £32.99 ● OUT NOW	
	CART SIZE	2Mbit
	PLAYERS	1
	STAGES	12
	SKILL LEVELS	1
	FEATURES	n/a
	SUPPLIER	Sega UK 16 Portland Road London W11 4LA (071) 7278070



Welcome to the wonderful world of *SD Valis*. This is a place where Japanese school-girls' psychopathic fantasies become reality!

Valis, our heroine, falls asleep over her school dinner (sushi-burger and chips) and wakes to find herself in a strangely surreal cityscape populated only by creatures intent on her untimely demise.

Being a smart young gal she soon realises that the only way to ensure her survival is to annihilate each and every life-form that comprise the indigenous fauna.

Luckily for her, she has several weapons at her disposal. Ms Valis also the option to go shopping for some high-fashion designer armour, which can enhance her speed, weapon type and shot power necessary for her survival. Valis's only problem is keeping her blue-rinsed hair in place throughout the adventure.

SD VALIS



Most of the sprites only take one shot, but don't get too close as explosions can kill, and if things get a bit hectic on screen you'll find one of your two precious smart bombs very handy.

The guardians awaiting you at the end of each sub-stage come in two varieties. The "Bosses", as they are quaintly known, are relatively easy to dispatch, being slower moving and more vulnerable than the latter. These are the real "Big-Boys" and can take the form of full-screen nightmares which just require precision shooting to dispatch. On doing so you are rewarded

The intro graphics, in fact all of the graphics, are almost an industry standard in Japanese animation now; the market being flooded with images of wide-eyed precocious youngsters. It's rather reminiscent of, and partially due to, the likes of *Battle of the Planets*, *Akira*, and more recently the *Ghostbusters* and *Turtles* cartoons.

This is prime "cutesy" material, most of the adversaries looking more cuddly than cut-throat. The only vaguely scary monster I came across was the 30 foot troglodyte waiting for me at the end of stage 1-3. Saying that though, the graphics are well-defined and nicely coloured, ranging from killer kangaroos to what looked to be flying kiwi-fruit!

The musical accompaniment is, quite frankly, a rather bland affair. This fairly repetitive and rather soul-

less dirge plods its way along throughout the game. The sound effects are no different, with just beeps and pings informing you that you have pressed the fire button or collided with an enemy.

On the playability side of things, *SD Valis* scores quite well. A fluid movement helps the game overcome its sound defi-

ciencies, and everything onscreen moves with just enough speed to keep you on your toes. The controls also help by being both simple and effective, whilst using all three buttons for shooting, jumping and even somersaulting.

PRO TIP Bosses only sustain damage to the head, so don't waste time aiming at their ample bodies!

Make sure you've always got the best armour possible by regularly checking and updating your status on the options screen.

with a new set of clothes (the old ones must have been ruined by that darned trog) and you begin the next, noticeably harder, level.

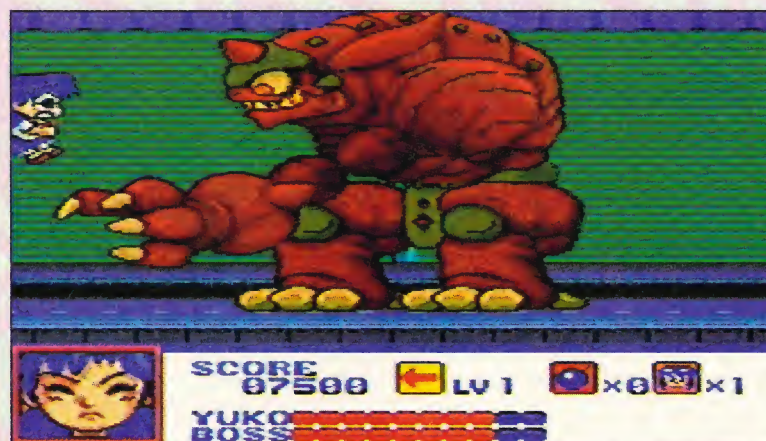
Valis is frustrating enough to come back to a few times but I found the repetition of reaching the same play area each time only to be stomped by the same adversary rather tiresome.

The main character is a girl; a factor which the female readership will know only too well is rather lacking in games at present. I would, however, suggest that unless you're a diehard feminist or a "cutesy-platform-romp" kinda person then save your pocket money for something else.

● James "big eyes" Scullion

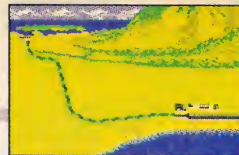


As Yuko, you feel somewhat uneasy at the prospect of facing this monstrosity on one of the earlier levels.



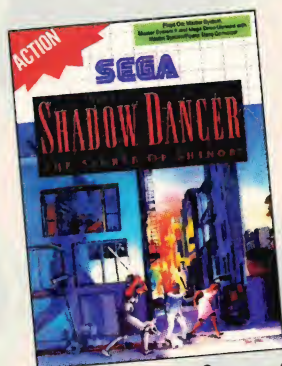
PROFILE	SD VALIS	LASER SOFT	£34	IMPORT
CART SIZE	4Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			SUPPLIER
STAGES	6			Console Concepts
SKILL LEVELS	1			The Village
FEATURES	n/a			Newcastle-under-Lyme
				Staffordshire
				ST5 1QB
				(0782) 712759

GRAPHICS	70
▲ Colourful, fun and friendly.	
▼ Nothing new in the style stakes.	
SOUND	40
▼ You'll fall asleep listening to the music.	
▼ Where were the explosions?	
GAMEPLAY	70
▼ You'll fall asleep listening to the music.	
▼ Where were the explosions?	
CHALLENGE	65
▲ Levels get progressively harder.	
▼ Not enough content to make it difficult.	
Half a day's fun at max - give it a miss.	
PROSCORE	65

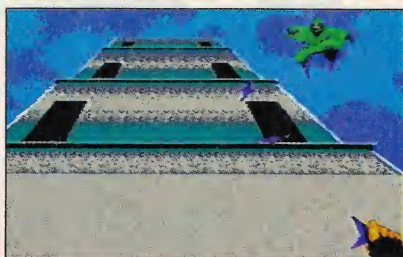


It is a little known fact but the sequel to Sega's classic ninja game *Shinobi* is, in fact, *Shadow Dancer* and not *Revenge of Shinobi*. *Shadow Dancer* has already appeared on the Mega Drive and the home computer formats, so it seems strange that the last machine to get a conversion of this Sega game is actually the first machine that Sega ever released. Still, there you have it.

The game centres around a new Sega star, Takashi. This noble ninja warrior must once again save the world from an evil, oppressive force. The violent terrorist group at the centre of the trouble is trying to spoil a crucial space mission. As Takashi, you must use your mystical skills – along with some shurikens, a mighty sword and your ninja dog(!) – to foil their plans. The terrorists were last spotted making for an airplane, so your first stop is the airport.

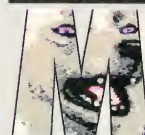


Our copy of *Shadow Dancer* was graciously donated by the illustrious KC at KC's Computer and Console Magic, 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1PY. Tel: (0509) 211799. The asking price is a more-than-generous-for-this-time-of-the-year £32.



SHADOW DANCER

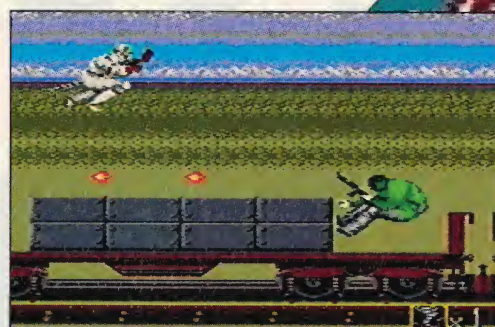
THE SECRET OF SHINOBI



Most games are sold on the pictures on the back of the box, and *Shadow Dancer's* do actually look quite good. But statics are deceiving, and these particularly so. The game suffers from two major problems: lack of speed and sprite flicker.

Takashi moves at a snail's pace, making the game very frustrating to play. Ninja games are supposed to be fast, violent action games, but this is just a painful slug out between you and the terrorists.

The flicker that afflicts the sprites, be they static objects or projectiles, is appalling. Quite often, it is so bad that you completely fail to notice something flying at you until it actually hits you in the head. The flicker in *Bubble Bobble* was acceptable, but when the problem affects the game-



The *Shadow Dancer* will do anything to avoid paying for his ticket, some do-gooder he turned out to be.

play it goes beyond just the limits of the machine.

While the screen is falling apart, the background music keeps things together. It's not an amazing oriental concoction, but at least it doesn't irritate. One nice sonic addition is the speech which you get when you cast magic. It consists of nonsensical Japanese screaming and raised quite a smile in the office when we first heard

PROFILE

SHADOW DANCER ● SEGA ● £32.99 ● OUT NOW

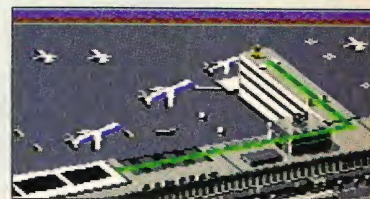
CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 4
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER

Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
(071) 7278070

it.

Because of the poor gameplay, it is very difficult to get anywhere in *Shadow Dancer*, therefore I would not recommend it to novices. Experienced ninjas will appreciate the inclusion of magic and the addition of a dog to help you out of those



If this game involved Spanish air traffic controllers, old *Dancer* would have ages to kill everybody.

awkward situations, but soon tire of the sub-standard visuals and unresponsive gameplay.

When there are great games like *Sonic* and *Donald Duck* forging a rosy future for MS owners, a game like *Shadow Dancer* does nothing but remind owners of the MS's rough up-bringing.

● Les Ellis

PRO TIP



Use the dog to full effect. If there's an enemy in an awkward position, duck down and summon your dog. Even if he doesn't kill them, he will give them enough grief for you to take over and finish them off.

GRAPHICS

▲ Backgrounds are detailed and varied.
▼ Inexcusable flicker on most sprites.

65

SOUND

▲ Speech is incredibly funny.
▲ Tune doesn't get on your nerves.

75

GAMEPLAY

▼ Far too slow for a ninja game.
▼ Too repetitive too quickly.

68

CHALLENGE

▼ The faults make it unfairly tough.
▼ Few stages, no skill levels.

70

Don't be fooled by the pictures, this game is a real dog.

PROSCORE

69

Cruel magic transformed a poor farmhand from a healthy man into a twisted and deformed beast, shunned from his village due to his frightening appearance. Tortured and maddened by his ghoulish features, and filled with an insane rage to rid the world of the one responsible for his state, the beast embarks on a quest.

Although unpleasant to go to a night club with, the beast is not without his advantages. He can jump great distances and punch and kick with incredible force. Those many days in the fields have served the young man well.

After pausing to regain his strength and plot his route to the dungeon and castle beyond, the beast leaves his homeland and plunges into evil territory. Deep in the pit of his stomach, the beast knows the odds are stacked against him. But faced with a life of contempt and ridicule, what choice does he have?

There are going to be a lot of surprised people out there when Tecmagik's version of *Shadow of the Beast* hits the streets. Okay, so it doesn't look exactly the same as the Amiga version – but it's not far off it.

The all new title screen is extremely eerie, with the word *Beast* shimmering on the screen in dark blue, accompanied by the terrific moody



The mighty death skeleton proves a formidable force, on his fourth pass he tries to crush the beast to a pulp. Luckily our warty friend has the orb power and can hit him from afar.

music. The luminous green beast clawing the words is also well drawn and bears a remarkable resemblance to the creature in *Krull*. I was a bit disappointed by the lack of options, though; with no continues *Beast* will be very difficult to complete.

The whole game is practically identical to the Amiga version. Parallax scrolling is very fast and smooth, with well-detailed backgrounds and many different colours to brighten the game up. Sound is also tasty, with a variety of in-game music to accompany the different levels. Combined with the detailed and atmospheric backgrounds, this realistically conveys the mood of the quest

MEGA BEAST SOON!

The Mega Drive version of *Shadow of the Beast*, which was originally developed by Psygnosis, is currently in the hands of Electronic Arts.

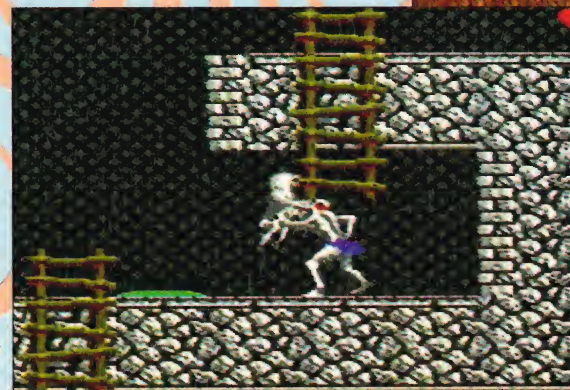
From what we've seen of it, this should be a stunning product. It looks and plays just like the old Amiga one, but without the long wait for disk-loading.



SHADOW OF THE BEAST



The shimmering blue letters fade onto the screen as the bright green beast claws at them. The impressive title screen is one of the attractive features of the new-look *Shadow of the Beast* for the Master System.



Ghostbusting on level three. These annoying spirits attack persistently until your life force is drained. To the left is slime which saps your precious strength.

— especially on level four.

Given the limitations of the Master System, Tecmagik have done well to convert this epic game. The difficulty level is perfect with levels being challenging but not too frustrating. However, I think the gameplay could have been finely tuned to help the player rather than hinder. As it is, longterm play may not be assured due to initial frustrations.

Those players using joypad will have great difficulty, mainly due to



THE ST

the awkward use of the up position for jumping. A jump button would have been much more preferable and allow more control, especially for the fast reactions required in *Beast*.

Also, the collision detection is suspect in places, like the water drops from the ceiling, fighting, and jumping the pits. Many times I found myself losing energy when I had clearly avoided the danger.

A feature of the gameplay is that



Like the sign says, don't touch! Oh, go on then... but face the consequences and don't blame me when your life's on the line and there's no-one to help.

While this certainly adds to the challenge, it frustrates mere mortals like myself.

You can't deny the fact that Tecmagik have done miracles with the MS version in terms of presentation and improved playability. No-one said it could be done but everything that was on the Amiga version is here – except the incessant and annoying loading from disk.

● Damian Butt

PROFILE	BEAST ●	TECMAGIK ●	£29.95 ●	OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	5			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	n/a			
		SUPPLIER		
		Tecmagik		
		Warwick House		
		Spring Road		
		Hall Green		
		Birmingham B11 3EA		
		(021) 7022323		

you can collect all the objects, get right to the guardian and subsequently lose a life. When you get to go all the way through the level

again, you'll find the objects won't have returned. This means you have to complete a level with none of the help you received the first time.

GRAPHICS	91
▲ Detailed and extremely impressive.	
▲ Title screen is particularly well done.	
SOUND	92
▲ Mood music plays throughout.	
▲ Some of the best tunes on the Master System.	
GAMEPLAY	81
▼ Awkward control method is frustrating.	
▼ Loss of items after use is a major problem.	
CHALLENGE	82
▼ Guardians are a little easy to defeat.	
▲ Five increasingly tough levels.	
This is definitely a very impressive game for the MS, but the playability is still in doubt.	
PROSCORE	90



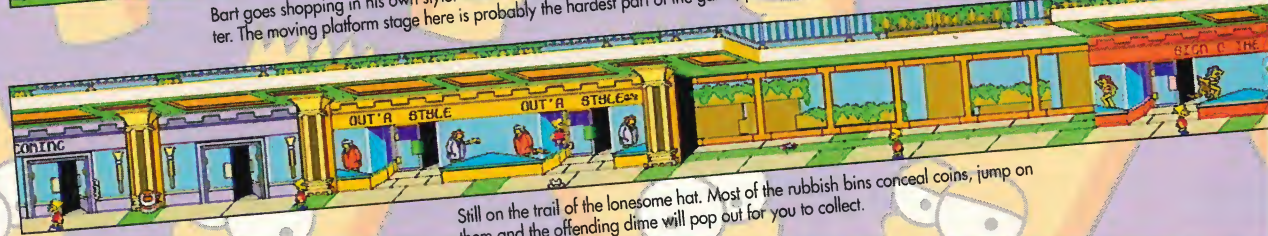
Having just clambered down the ladder into the second stage, the beast encounters the terrifying underworld below, populated by foul creatures intent on ending his quest. The chests in this level contain healing potions (red) and keys to enter the inner sanctums. The deep pit to the left of the dungeon full of murderous spikes has an extra life on a ledge on the far side. But you will need a jumping potion to clear the gap. Besides the multitude of minions to face, there is also The Keeper of the Orb. As long as you keep ducking and punching the huge green dragon, he should die, bestowing you with the powers of the Orb. This magical crystal provides you with extra shooting power to defeat the daunting Death Skeleton at the end of this level. Only through a combination of your beastial strength and human intelligence will you survive under the shadow of the beast.

Aliens have invaded the town of Springfield and are slowly turning the inhabitants into space mutants. Their mission is so covert no-one knows it's even happening. No-one, that is, except for a small child. In most cases there would be nothing this kid could do, but this youngster is no ordinary child. This is one Bartholomew J Simpson, known as Bart to his friends and most of his enemies (including his parents, his sister, his teachers, and Moe, the owner of the tavern).

Bart was trying out his new x-ray glasses one night when he spotted the aliens plotting their dastardly plan. Only through these glasses can the aliens be seen, but no-one else in Springfield believes him. He must prove them all wrong and expose the aliens.



Bart waits inside Krusty's Funhouse in the fun fair. Below he wanders lonely as a cloud through the Springfield Museum.



With a game based around The Simpsons, you're not exactly expecting a RPG, and thankfully, the whole presentation of this game sets you up for a landmark in console conversions of TV series.

The game starts with a brilliant cartoon sequence which tells you the whole storyline. The animation and expressions on the faces of people, especially Bart, is exemplary and builds a terrific atmosphere.

When you come to play the game, there are no options whatsoever, which is a bit disappointing. A skill level is always much appreciated, and even a little sound test would have been fun, but both – as on the Nintendo version – are sadly missing.

The graphics of the Nintendo version of *The Simpsons* were criticised by many for the small sprites, and the Mega Drive version is exactly the same. But there's absolutely no reason for any complaints as all the characters, especially Bart, are full of detail and completely recognisable. If they were any bigger, the play area would be enormous and the whole game would become very tiresome.

All the main characters in the cartoon are included, from Nelson the bully to Krusty the clown. Best of the lot is probably Moe, who you can ring up at his tavern to play a practical joke on. (If you've seen the TV show, you'll know what I mean.)

The graphics convey the cartoon style perfectly. The background buildings are big and brightly coloured, especially on the fairground level (the third) where the tents and sideshows shine out with contrasting colours and bold definition.

All of the levels are vast and varied, and although they all have a particular theme, you never really know what or who you'll encounter next.

Sound is frighteningly accurate. The theme tune from the actual TV series is fairly corny, and the MD version retains all the odd beeps and squeals. Throughout the game you get a sort of remix version of the title tune. It's light and cheerful and doesn't intrude on the gameplay too

PRO TIP



On level one you can completely bypass the skateboard section. Get the key when you are in the hardware shop and use it when you are by the house. You will then emerge by the old folks' home. This avoids the risk of losing lives in that long skateboard section.

much – although it's definitely background music and shouldn't be blasted up like a shoot-'em-up soundtrack.

Sound effects are short and sweet, but there is a bit of speech to make up for it. This simply consists of a sampled "Eat my shorts" when Bart loses a life. Although it doesn't sound too accurate to the real character, it does add a bit of humour and softens the blow of dying.

The whole game is definitely platform based, but with the smaller graphics and colourful backgrounds it plays a lot different from most games in this genre.

Everything is based around picking things up, but unlike some arcade adventures, *The Simpsons* is a lot more logical. While some games may give you, for example, an orb to do with what you will, *The Simpsons* gives you simple



X-RAY SPECS

25060 SCORE 3 LIVES 801 TIME 15 GEMS



PROTALK

The spaced out looney graphics are excellent, and as for the gameplay, it's fun, frantic and easy to grasp. Its only drawbacks are the dire tunes and the collision detection, which can be very frustrating.



Name: Ryan Butt
From: Bradford-upon-Avon
Age: 18
Machine: Mega Drive
Fave games: Desert Strike, EA Hockey



Bart's going loopy by this shop. Avoid these rings and the rampant Pro Yo logo to get to the guardian. When you reach him throw the shopping bags to kill him off and get to the next level.

things like a coin or rocket, which you can relate to and find logical uses for. And just because this is only 4Mbit, don't think it's small. There's loads to do and loads of places to do it. Five levels may not seem many, but you'll be playing for weeks before you complete it.

The first level is basically a romp through the streets of Springfield, familiarising yourself with the use of items. The second goes through the Shopping Mall and soon gets you used to the jumping. On the Fair level, you really start to enjoy yourself, partaking in many of the sideshows for extra lives and bonuses. From there you venture inside Springfield Museum, where you must get rid of the exit signs whilst avoid-

ing the laser beam security system. Your last battle with the mutants is inside the nuclear plant; just collect the radioactive rods and return them to the nuclear core.

Being one of the many fans of *The Simpsons*, I was really looking forward to this game. Dare I say it, the Nintendo version wasn't too bad, and



Riding the Big Wheel in the fun fair, Bart has to burst all the red balloons and avoid the brats.



You have to open the doors in a certain order, when you do it right you will get bonuses galore.



ITEMS TO SMITE 'EM



Use the key to bypass the skate-board section completely.



Use the cherry bomb to make the bird fly out of the pet shop.



The magnet looks nice but it holds many secrets that will take ages to work out.



The rockets are used to put the windows out and hit statues.



Use the whistle when you reach the last window of the retirement home for some extras.



Use the wrench on the hydrant to spray the hardware shop purple.

Flying Edge have done major enhancements on the Mega Drive version to make it brilliant. Just like the cartoon series, this game has humour, style and will keep you stuck to the screen. Buy it!

● Les "Santa's helper" Ellis

GRAPHICS

▲ Brilliant intro sequence; crystal clear pics.
▲ Well-defined characters; great backgrounds.

90

SOUND

▲ Pleasantly boppy tune plays throughout.
▲ "Eat my shorts!"

83

GAMEPLAY

▲ Good combination of platforms and puzzles.
▲ You keep finding out new features.

92

CHALLENGE

▲ Very long levels with lots to do on them.
▲ Some very tough sections to the levels.

93

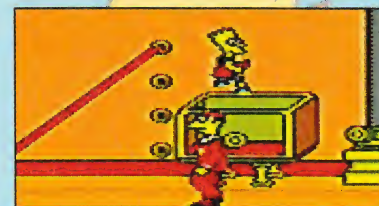
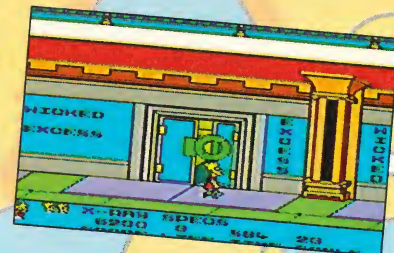
One of the most entertaining and challenging games around.

PROSCORE 92

PROFILE	THE SIMPSONS	●	FLYING EDGE	●	£39.99	●	OUT JULY
	CART SIZE	4Mbit					
	PLAYERS	1					
	STAGES	5					
	SKILL LEVELS	1					
	FEATURES	n/a					
	SUPPLIER	Acclaim UK					
		4 Walcote Place					
		Winchester					
		Hants					
		SO23 9AP					
		☎ (0962) 877788					



THE SIMPSONS BART VS. THE SPACE MUTANTS



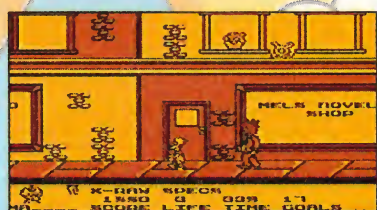
In the museum you have to watch out for the laser beams; jumping on the cases opens them for you.



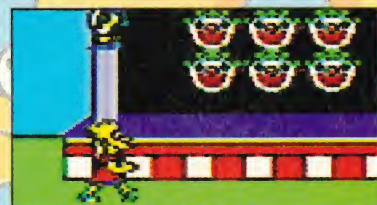
Bart is not restricting his mischievous activities to the Mega Drive. Master System owners also get the chance to save Springfield from those dastardly space mutants. And I'll tell you something now, Master System owners are in for a real treat.

On the MS, *The Simpsons* is very, very close to the Mega Drive version. In fact, in some ways it is easier to get to grips with and more fun to play.

Visually, it looks excellent, rating right on up there with *Sonic* and *Lucky Dime Caper*. Even the smooth and vivid visuals of *Asterix* are chal-



Jump on this mutant and then spray the plant pot above. You have to get over 20 objects to clear the level so everyone counts. X-ray spex are active!



Use these sideshows to gain extra lives and other bonuses. It's worth wasting a few coins to gain the help.

lenged by the Bartman.

The sound is slightly simplified to adapt to the MS's capabilities, but that annoyingly hummable tune is still just that. There isn't really much in the way of effects, but what's included is a big improvement over the beeps and pings you usually get.

With most Master System owners being younger than Mega Drive owners, this version of *The Simpsons* is a bit more generous in the gameplay area. The jumps don't have to be so precise, for instance, which makes

some of the more intimidating sections, like the Shopping Mall and the Museum, easier to get through.

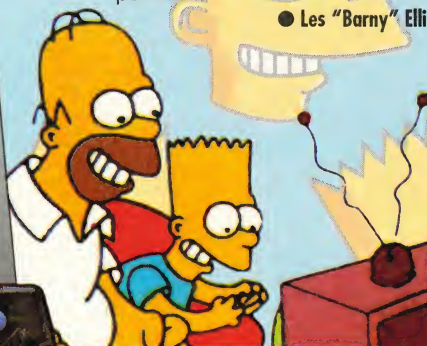
All the tricks and escapades that make the game such fun to play are included. There's the hoax phone call to Moe's Tavern, spraying the cinema audience and firing rockets at window, and that's just the first level.

This game is more instantly playable than the Mega Drive version and is a more impressive achievement. For that reason, the Master System version of *The Simpsons* deserves a higher rating. If you're one of the many Master System owners who's been waiting with baited breath for your version of *The Simpsons*, then rush out and buy this immediately - you won't be disappointed.

● Les "Barney" Ellis

BART vs GEAR

Playing *Bart* through the Master Gear converter is no joke. If you really can't wait another few weeks for your own version, then you will have to contend with very small sprites and some items like coins that you won't even see. Be sensible, wait for the real thing.



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Large, bright and colourful backgrounds.
- ▲ Easily recognisable characters.

91

SOUND

- ▲ Almost identical tune to the MD version.
- ▲ No speech but impressive spot effects.

85

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Salvo compelling cartoon fun.
- ▲ Terrific Springfield is great fun.

93

CHALLENGE

- ▲ It's tough enough to challenge all.
- ▲ Generous collision detection in places.

93

One of the top five games for the Master System!

PROSCORE

93

PROFILE	THE SIMPSONS	FLYING EDGE	£32.99	OUT JULY
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	5			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	n/a			
	SUPPLIER			
	Acclaim UK			
	4 Walcoté Place			
	Winchester			
	Hants			
	SO23 9AP			
	(0962) 877788			



Game Gear owners have to wait a little longer for their own version of *Bart vs the Space Mutants*, but only a month. The last version of *The Simpsons* has been specially adapted to squeeze all the action onto the small screen.

Graphically the game is identical to the other Sega version, with two minor differences: the characters that appear are all bigger so that you can see them on a small screen, and to keep all the dimensions accurate the buildings have been enlarged, which means the top has been neatly lopped off.

The latter change may seem



When the clock reads 200 or 400, the cinema doors open and a purple film watcher comes out. Spray him, dudes!

strange, but all that has happened is the omission of the windows on the second floors. The only level this seems to affect is the first, but it's no great hardship. Aside from this, the graphics are of the same high quality as you would expect.

The music is a brave attempt to recreate something close to *The Simpsons* theme, but due to the little speaker, it doesn't quite make it. The frequent drum rolls and note scales bang away in the background, but don't add any real atmosphere. The effects, however, are some of the best I have heard on the

PROF

THE SIMPSONS ● FLYING EDGE ● £29.99 ● OUT AUGUST

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 5
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
Acclaim UK
4 Walcote Place
Winchester
Hants
SO23 9AP
(0962) 877788

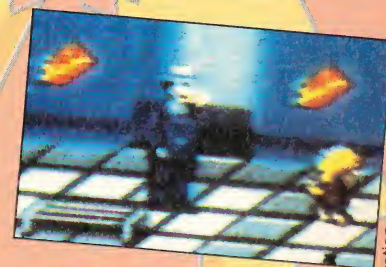


Even on the Game Gear the x-ray spex play an important part. The extra life is difficult to get, but much appreciated later on in the game. To reach it, do a big jump onto the bin and another long leap to swoop it from the top level. Note how the screen is more compressed on the GG.

Gear, with some great buzzes and blips.

The Game Gear version shares the same long levels as the others, but on the small screen they seem even longer – the museum level is a monster. It's a pity that the tricks and antics of Bart seem to be restricted to the first level. On the rest, he seems to just run and jump, with the emphasis on arcade skills and not strategy.

The Simpsons on the Game Gear



is one of the hardest games I've played in a long while. It will keep you coming back again and again, just to see what the next bit of the level contains. A truly great Game Gear version that every hand-held addict should get hold of.

● Les "Abdul" Ellis

GRAPHICS	90
▲ Backdrops are massive and varied.	
▲ Central characters are big and well animated.	
SOUND	79
▲ Excellent effects, pushing the Gear's speaker.	
▼ The music is slightly disjointed but recognisable.	
GAMEPLAY	92
▲ Packed with plenty of humorous situations.	
▲ Never gets repetitive, even on later levels.	
CHALLENGE	93
▲ On the higher levels, every jump is tough.	
▲ Terrifyingly long levels seem to go on for ever.	

A high price but will keep you playing for ages and ages.

PROSCORE 92

THE SIMPSONS BART VS. THE SPACE MUTANTS



SLIME WORLD

This is definitely the greenest game of the year. Not because it is particularly eco-friendly, but because EVERYTHING is coloured green. The levels are green, the aliens are green and even Todd turns green on more than the odd occasion. In fact, the only thing that isn't green is the intro sequence of Todd's ship crashing on the planet. From then on, it's green city.

The onscreen display of the levels is so small they probably couldn't use much colour anyway. The way that only part of the cavern is revealed is a novel approach, but you don't really see enough. The display is 80% green and 20% cavern. It should have been bigger; this is a waste of space.

The sprites on the early levels are small, although there's a lot of detail in their animation and weapons. Later levels reveal some larger aliens which can only be taken out with mega-bombs.

The music is instantly forgettable and, thankfully, can be turned off from the title screen. It's one of those



If you get covered in slime, you can always take a dip in the nearest pool to wash it off. At least this saves on the slime shields.

horribly jingly tunes that doesn't really relate to the atmosphere of exploration in a dark cavern. The sound effects are fairly limited, although I must admit the wet squelches as the creatures explode is fun.

When you start playing *Slime World*, there does seem to be a lot to it. After all, with all those items to collect it, it should be fairly deep. It's not. After a while the game just becomes repetitive – run, shoot, pick up, jump, run, shoot, etc. Although the levels are very long, there isn't enough variety in the action or the graphics to make you want to see more.

The two-player split screen game



Stand clear and blast away at these aliens, or drop a mega bomb before you go into the room. It's tough but someone has to do it.

PRO TIP If you enter a room with stacks of aliens in it, just select a mega bomb and throw just as you exit the room. It will kill everything in the room while leaving you safe to explore it at your leisure.

is a great option, and should be used whenever possible – two blasters are better than one, after all. Another neat feature allows you to tackle the missions in any order, and a password option means you can pop straight back into the action at any time.

I have played *Slime World* on the Lynx and, although I hate to admit it, I do prefer that version. While this version is no less playable, the graphics and sound just don't come up to scratch.

● Les "Slimer" Ellis

GRAPHICS	59
▲ Nice intro to the levels.	
▼ But just too much green.	
SOUND	67
▲ Dig those squelchy effects.	
▼ Bury that music for good.	
GAMEPLAY	71
▲ Initially addictive, loads of items and blasting.	
▼ Too repetitive and gets boring after a while.	
CHALLENGE	70
▲ Long levels go all over the place.	
▼ The same problems keep cropping up.	

Poor graphics and sound, this ex-Lynx game finds no home on the MD.

PROSCORE 64

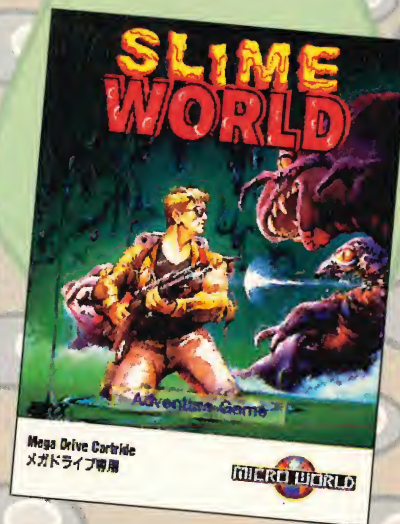
PROFILE	SLIME WORLD	●	EPYX	●	£34	●	IMPORT
CART SIZE	4Mbit						SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	2						Console Concepts
STAGES	6						The Village
SKILL LEVELS	1						Newcastle-under-Lyme
FEATURES	teampay						Staffordshire
							ST5 1QB
							£(0782) 712759

Slime World is a conversion of Epyx's innovative two-player Atari Lynx game. It stars a determined young man called Todd.

Young Todd is an intrepid explorer. He's brave, he's tough, unfortunately he's not too smart. His Mk1 Space Mini Metro (1.1L) has broken down again. This time he's miles away from home and the nearest planet to land on is *Slime World*.

As its name would suggest, *Slime World* is nothing but caverns full of slime and slime monsters. Todd has to get through these caverns collecting gems and other useful objects to get back to his ship and repair it.

Who's out to stop him? More like, who isn't! If the monsters don't get you, the slime pits will, and if they don't, the dripping walls will. How can Todd ever escape!





was a big fan of *Super Skweek* on the Amiga, and it's amazing to see all its addictive game-play squeezed into the Game Gear. The whole concept of *Skweek* is to keep things simple and the graphics reflect this. *Skweek* is little more than a yellow blob and the enemies are kept simple. The tracks around which you travel are vastly different to each other but keep the same basic blue-to-pink colours which makes all the special tiles easily visible.

Sound is also simple. The effects are little more than a few squeaks (no pun intended), but the strange tune does seem to suit the game-play.



ing to find the safest route. The levels are well thought out and progressively difficult, keeping the challenge constant.

Skweek may not look all that good

but the playability is faultless. With only 30 levels, Pros will eat it up in no time but even after completion, it is fun to go back to *Skweek* to beat your best time on each level. Destined to become a classic in the mould of *Columns* and *Woody Pop*.

● Les "Pipskweek" Ellis

Cute furry blobs seem to be making a comeback. Over the next few months you'll be seeing that kiwi from *New Zealand Story*, the *Popils* guys and the *Gadget Twins*, but first off there's the French blob known as *Skweek*.

Skweek came out years ago on home computers, to much acclaim and many rewards world-wide. It was soon followed by a sequel called *Super Skweek*, featuring *Skweek's* cuddly cousin of the same name.

Skweek has to paint all the levels of his world and run the gauntlet of vicious ghosts and ostentatious octopuses. This initial puzzle may seem very simple, but will soon have you standing on your head in confusion.



PROTIP Just in case you don't make it to some of the higher levels, here are some passwords: AJGP, LLJG, AJEN, ALAL, AJCL and AACC.

Painting tiles and shooting monsters may seem pretty routine but *Skweek* is infuriatingly addictive as you work your way around the tracks try-



GRAPHICS	84
▲ Small but vivid landscape.	
▲ Smooth scrolling over large levels.	
SOUND	76
▲ Happy music plays throughout.	
▼ Simplistic effects are poor.	
GAMEPLAY	85
▲ An easy idea to pick up.	
▲ Appeal to all ages.	
CHALLENGE	79
▲ All action is against the clock.	
▲ Levels are progressively difficult.	
Zee French know how to make 'em - simple yet puzzling.	
PROSCORE	84



PROFILE	SKWEEK	INFOGRAMES	£24	IMPORT
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	30			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	password			
SUPPLIER	Kingbit Games			
	9 Caledonian Road			
	Haymarket			
	Edinburgh			
	EH11 2DA			

Sol-Feace is the first Mega-CD shoot-'em-up and presents you with six levels of pure mayhem packed with tons of ways of getting killed.

The basic plot is immaterial, all you have to know is how to use your powerful fighter and in which direction the enemy lies. At the end of a variety of complex landscapes, you face an adversary who more than likely takes up most of the screen and will require some nifty dodging and more than a little luck to defeat.

Impressive it is. The graphics are on a par with coin-ups and the sound defies belief. But the big question is, will it break any new ground?

Lock in, load up and get ready, pilgrim, this is where we separate the men from the boys.

SOL-FEACE

You cannot fail to be impressed by the visual and audible delight that all CD games possess and *Sol-Feace* is no different.



Seldom have I seen such animation and speed in a game, and, for once, I was speechless. If

you have watched the Japanese-

influenced cartoons such as *Battle of the Planets*, you will think you are watching TV - it's that perfect.

It is the moment the first demon, a mechanical crab, enters the fray that mouths begin to drop. Not only does the whole game

look like a George Lucas fantasy, but the sound that emanates from the speakers is enough to make you fall off your chair. The crab screams like a demon from hell; mixed with ten different klaxons and pulsing lasers, the acoustic backwash can be deafening. *Sol-Feace* successfully merges the onscreen effects with

an awesome soundtrack to create an experience you are not likely to forget.

There are faults with

Formation weapons and grenades.

The chaos walker is one tough machine.



Three ships to do the job.

Whoa! Check out those munitions.

Sol-Feace though. There are only six fairly short stages and for a large memory CD, you expect a lot more.

With so much devastation on screen at any one time you would expect some slow down and regrettably there is, but what really annoyed me was the way you could die horribly, maybe three for four times in the eye of an explo-



sion, and not have any idea what is going on.

Even so, despite a few flaws, this is a gob-smacking shoot-'em-up which is sure to delight all those arcade fanatics that thought the Mega-CD would be swamped by RPGs.

● Damian "Crabs" Butt

PROTIP

Some guys just cannot be killed. For instance, when you reach the pincer arms on level two, dive down towards them so that they home in and then push up to the top to avoid their deadly grasp.



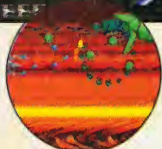
PROFILE

SOL FEACE ● WOLFTEAM ● £45 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE n/a
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 6
SKILL LEVELS 2
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
ICE
17 Doncaster Road
Goldthorpe
Rotherham
SB6 9HG

The glories of war. *Sol Feace* pits you against lasers (above) the gargantuan Fire Snake (left) and the most impressive of the lot, the huge battle ship (below).



GRAPHICS

▲ Spot-on guardians and superb detail.
▲ Intro is stunning.

91

SOUND

▲ The crab screen alone is worth it.
▲ Excellent tunes and mood music.

92

GAMEPLAY

▲ Generally fast and furious.
▼ But does slow down occasionally.

84

CHALLENGE

▲ Tough to master.
▼ A bit too easy after long plays.

80

Superb shoot-'em-up, but lacks levels considering the high asking price.

PROSCORE 84

While it's hard to imagine spinning around in a chair when playing any conversion of the coin-op, *Space Harrier* on the Game Gear does at least make an effort to look like the arcade version. The landscape is the traditional chequered display and rushes beneath you at a tremendously fast and smooth rate. However, it does slow down when you get stacks of enemies and their bullets on screen, but if you're any good that shouldn't happen too often. In fact, the graphics are top-notch, apart from looking a little blocky later on into the game. The sonics are hardly Mega-CD, but the GG does make an attempt to utter "Get Ready" occasionally. The music is really strange and, while good in its own right, is totally unsuitable for the aggressive frenetic action of *Space Harrier*. It sounds more akin to something at a fair-ground. The challenge is still there, but

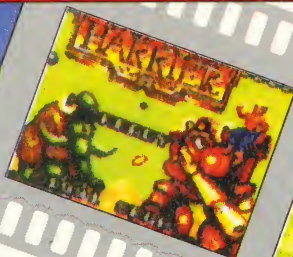
without the chair, the original game soon became very monotonous and this is the case with the GG version. Also, the smaller this game gets, the less you feel in control of your destiny, making it a chore to play rather than a pleasure. An accurate conver-

sion of a very boring and dated coin-op. Why did they bother?

● Les "Spaced out" Ellis



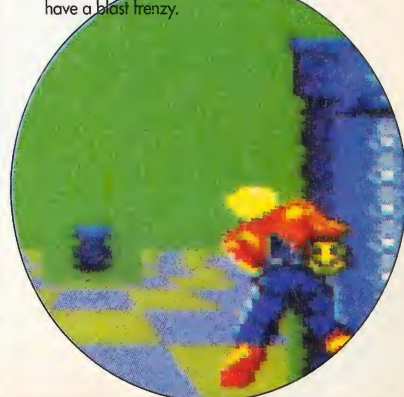
PROTIP If you get stuck (or bored), try out these level codes: FBHE, BFCH and AGEK.



SPACE HARRIER



If you can't wait for *Space Harrier* to come flying into a Sega stockist near you, we got ours from KC's Computer and Console Magic, 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire. Tel: (0509) 211799. For £24 you can take off and have a blast frenzy.



PROFILE

SPACE HARRIER ● SEGA ● £24.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 12
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES password

SUPPLIER
Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
©(071) 7278070

GRAPHICS
▲ Fast and smooth movement around the screen.
▼ Terrible blocks around some enemy sprites.

80

SOUND
▲ Brave attempt at speech.
▼ Unsuitable music.

78

GAMEPLAY
▼ Poor collision detection is frustrating.
▼ No addictive qualities; too repetitive by far.

65

CHALLENGE
▲ Some of the levels are very tough.
▼ But would you want to keep trying?

73

A nostalgia trip you may want to forget in a hurry.

PROSCORE 71



I don't know, what kind of a world is it that would allow an evil doctor to kidnap cute little animals and turn them into robots? Actually, it sounds pretty cool. Imagine walking down your local high street, not having to worry about stepping in excretory products from cats and dogs. Just think, you could sunbathe in your back garden without having to look around for sheep droppings before you laid down your towel. Yes we've got the measure of the animals now, their days of just being cute pets are numbered. The head of this animal-bashing organisation is the great Dr Ivo Robotnik, international mad scientist and all-round nasty piece of work. We love him. Good on him for capturing those pesky animals and turning them into something useful, like slave robots. But the animals are fighting back. And who do they choose to rescue the stranded animals? A hedgehog! Wow, how scary. Prepare for hedgehog sandwich.



The bonus level in the Master System game is far better than on the Mega Drive.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Bigger off, Kick Off, get outta here, Out Run, Sonic is here! To say Master System owners have been eagerly awaiting *Sonic* would be like saying Mega Drive owners are looking forward to the Mega-CD – one of the gross understatements of the year.

But Mega Drive owners have been mocking their 8-bit friends, sure that Sonic would never be properly translated on the Master System – how wrong they were. *Sonic the Hedgehog* is, quite simply, the greatest game to ever appear on the Master System.

Right from the title screen, you get the feeling that you are playing something really special – and you are. As soon as that cute little blue hog starts waving his finger at you,

you can do nothing but watch in awe as the Master System performs feats unheard of on an 8-bit console.

Sonic on the MD was never one to hold you up with loads of options, and neither does this, all you get is an informative little map at the beginning of each level showing your trail and the level name. A nice addition, reminiscent of Mario on the NES.

The levels are huge compared to what you normally get in a Master System game. They may have lost the parallax scrolling of the Mega Drive version but, personally, I think this is an improvement. Now the backgrounds give a subtle feeling of actually being in another world – the mountains scroll smoothly by on the first level – because they don't detract from the action in the foreground.

PROTIP Whenever you see a box with an arrow pointing down in it, jump on it as this indicates a restart point if you die. If you miss them, you'll be travelling back to the beginning of the stage over and over again. Also, when you restart there, remember to jump on it again just in case you die again.

The environment through which *Sonic* ventures is practically identical to the Mega Drive game. It has everything from the original – and then some. The first two levels, although different in playing style to MD *Sonic*, are graphically the same. It is only when you encounter the



The underwater levels in *Sonic* are great fun, but watch out for the big bubbles because you need to gulp them to keep breathing.

PROFILE	SONIC • SEGA • £29.99 • OUT NOW
CART SIZE	2Mbit
PLAYERS	1
STAGES	6
SKILL LEVELS	1
FEATURES	n/a
	SUPPLIER Sega Europe 16 Portland Road London W11 4LA (071) 7278070





The Water level provides many tough challenges, like this strange creature that fires his four deadly balls at you. Just bide your time and let them go by to reach Robotnik at the end.

waterfalls and then the jungle that you feel you're in a completely different game. The MS Sonic designers seem to have taken the best bits from the original game, and then added tons more excellent graphical effects and playability.

Now there's an interesting word, playability. The original *Sonic* sure had it, but admittedly the game did get a tad boring after a month or so. Once you'd completed it a couple of times, you never really wanted to go back to it. In my opinion, the Master System version is as close as you are going to get to the perfect game.



The levels are much larger, the bonus stage is inventive, and above all the game is constantly challenging and enjoyable. And if you're wondering about the speed of the thing, fear not for it's still mind-numbingly fast. In fact, if you stick it on the Game Gear through the Master Gear, it's too fast! The LCD can't update quick enough, which is why I would recommend GG owners wait for the real thing, which will hopefully be slowed down and made more vivid for the smaller screen.

PRO TIP



The first level guardian is a doddle, just hit him as he descends the side of the screen. The second Robotnik is a little tougher. Jump onto the middle platform and when he appears, jump on him, and then jump onto the platform furthest from him. When he fires, jump straight up as the third bullet comes down. Jump on him again, and repeat till he's dead.



After travelling the many confusing and tiring tunnels of the Tech level, you encounter Robotnik on a flying platform. Keep a cool head to defeat this evil fiend.



Lastly, bright and bubbly music plays all the time and matches the Mega version note for note – it even speeds up when you collect the turbo boots. The sound effects are also identical, even the whoops as *Sonic* jumps and collects rings.

All through playing *Sonic* I had but one thought on my mind; how the hell did they get the Master System to perform this. It smashes everything else on both graphics and sound, and the gameplay is unrivalled. Finally, I know many readers may not believe it, but the Master System version of *Sonic* is actually

Extra thanks and sausage sandwiches go to KC's Computers and Console Magic at 3 High Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire, & (0509) 211799. They managed to supply us with the cart despite the millions of paying customers who were clearing *Sonic* from the shelves faster than you can say "hedgehog sandwich". And it's hardly any wonder when KC is selling it for just £28!

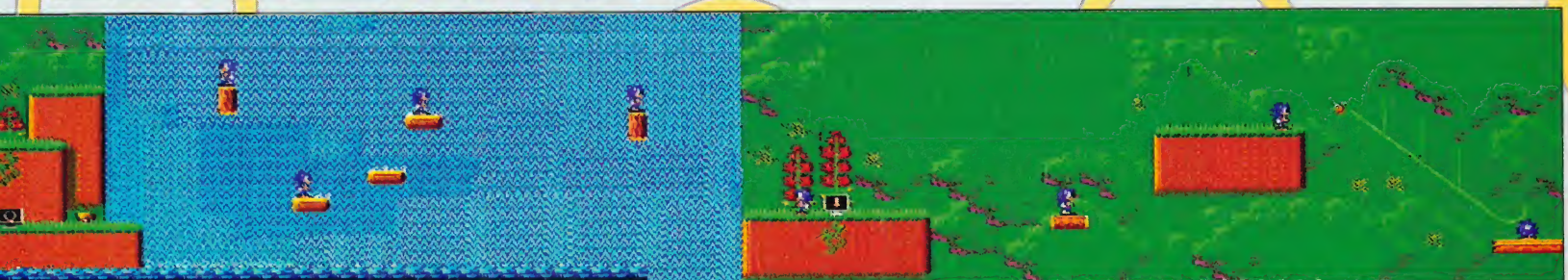
better than the Mega Drive version. Just watch those Power Base converter sales rise and rise as word of the MS version spreads. The likes of *Out Run* and *Super Kick Off* can forget it. *Sonic* will be number one for Christmas without a doubt, and is sure to be running rings around the competition way into 1992!

Les Ellis



Jump, Sonic, jump! Those rings hold extra treasures because at the end of every level you can cash them in for points. If you can collect 100 rings in a row, you'll be awarded with an extra life! The scales pictured here are just one of the many interactive objects that have to be mastered if you're to get anywhere.

GRAPHICS	97
▲ Superb detail on all levels and sprites.	
▲ Astonishing speed that will blow your mind!	
SOUND	93
▲ Faithful renditions of the Mega Drive music.	
▲ Decent effects are a MS first!	
GAMEPLAY	96
▲ Very responsive and accurate collision	
▲ Damned addictive jumping action	
CHALLENGE	93
▲ Still a bit too easy.	
▲ Long, mind-teasing levels.	
It is quite possible that <i>Sonic</i> will never be bettered on the Master System.	
PROSCORE	96





Welcome to the Dave Perry workout Video. Ok, let's warm up. Knees bend, arms stretch, etc.



pro YO!

"Okay, boys, now listen up! This is gonna be a tough one. As you know we're going up against the league champions Super Nashwan. And as you also know, they've put 23 men into intensive care this season already, four of whom would be unable to breathe if they weren't plugged in!

"We've trained hard, you've all got new body armour, and the steroids seem to be working well too! But this match is crucial, because if we lose, we're outta the league - and if that happens, we're also out of a job! Now get out there and hurt them, and I mean HURT them! Dominate, intimidate, destroy! You can do it! Go kick some ass and break some necks! Remember, we're Brutal Deluxe!"



Get ready!" shouts the ref, and they're off! Brutal Deluxe vs Renegades promises to be vicious!

What joy! To be given one of your all-time favourite pieces of software to review! I've been following the fortunes of the world's most-maligned Speedball team ever since they first appeared on the home computer market, and after last month's Master System review, I'm now supremely happy to inform you all that they'll soon be making a completely official appearance on the Mega Drive (we reviewed the import version in SEGAPRO#3).

This translation is every byte as good as the original computer versions. In fact, were they placed side-by-side, I'd be hard pushed to tell you the difference between them, that's how faithful the conversion has been!

Our story begins in the year 2095. The unregulated

sport of Speedball is forced underground, due to corruption and excessive violence. To combat this problem, Speedball 2 is born! A newer, more accessible game with family interest, it captures the interest of a nation! Five years on, and a new team bursts in on the scene. A bunch of no-hopers, it's up to you, as player-manager to take Brutal Deluxe to the top!

Without a doubt, this is one of the most visually superb games ever to reach the Mega Drive. The stunning intro statics of the coliseum, and the finely-crafted metallic feel to the options screen and nasium pave the way for the glories to come!

After selecting which type of match you wish to partake in, either knock-out, league or cup, it's off to the

gym to enhance the players' physical and mental abilities. Individual players can be worked on, or alternatively, you can boost certain sections of the team, or the whole team. You also choose which attributes to magnify, from pure aggression to speed or intelligence.

The player sprites are large, highly detailed and superbly animated! They have a full range of moves including bone-jarring sliding tackles, jaw-distorting punches, and the ability to launch themselves into the air in a huge leap for aerial balls. Scattered around the techno-drome play area are bonuses to be picked up. These come in three varieties: cash tokens for more armour in the next round, on-court strength boosters, and play inhibitors which impair your opponent's play.

Speedball 2 is packed with other features the original lacked, including score multipliers, bonus panels which may be struck for even more points, warp tubes that transport the



SPEEDBALL

RUTAL DELUXE



PRO TIP As with the MS version, the multiplier is the focus of attention. Boost it up before you do

anything, then amaze your mates by hammering them by phenomenal margins! Light both indicators and all points scored will be doubled in value!

ball across to the far side of the field of play, and your favourite and mine, the electroball. Whoever charges this up is assured of a goal, as the rival team is unable to touch the ball, let alone stop it, until the charge is dissipated!

The sonics are authentic too. The cyber-tune thumping from the speakers is most definitely the original, with nary a change to it! Sound effects are abundant, and include sampled speech. The ref's "get ready!", "replay!", and the roar of the crowd are praiseworthy, and add plenty to the illusion. The tendon-ripping tackles also have a fine "crunch!" sound tacked onto them, and the bonuses all have the obligatory bells and whistles! The only noise I found missing from this version was the cry of "ice cream, ice cream!" as a player is fatally wounded! But then again, if you've never had it, you'll never miss it!

Gameplay is fast and glossy, and observes the closest-man-to-the-ball control method. Collision detection is impeccable, and the flow of the game is only marred by the half-time hooter. In the SEGA PRO offices, Speedball 2 is widely recognised (on any format) as a timeless classic, which will undoubtedly remain playable at least until the year 2095! The Mega Drive version enforces this thinking.

● James "Bitmap" Scullion

Speedball 2's play area is pretty damn huge, but you won't notice this while you're playing, because the action is non-stop, fast 'n' furious!

PROFILE	SPEEDBALL 2	VIRGIN	£TBA	OUT SEPT
CART SIZE	4Mbit			
PLAYERS	2			
STAGES	16			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	versus			
		SUPPLIER		
		Virgin Games		
		338a Ladbroke Grove		
		London		
		W10 5AH		
		0(081) 9602265		

MASTERLY MUCK-UP

Due to a completely confusing state of affairs (which we haven't worked out ourselves yet!), we were under the impression that the Master System Speedball 2 given to us by Virgin for SEGA PRO#9 was for review purposes.

However, it now transpires that the Master System version will not be out till MARCH 1993, so obviously Virgin didn't want it reviewed this early. Unbelievably, this excellent version hasn't even past Sega approval yet. Our apologies to Virgin if we have in any way pre-empted interest in the Master System version, but we did review it in good faith.

So, there you have it: an excellent game that's completely finished yet won't be on sale till next year! Oh the travesty!

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Crystal-clear and high-definition
- ▲ Super-smooth scrolling

92

SOUND

- ▲ Flawless rendition of the Speedball theme tune
- ▲ Expertly finished sound effects

91

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Bonuses keep interest high
- ▲ Brilliant one- AND two-player games

94

CHALLENGE

- ▲ The more you play, the harder it gets!
- ▲ Once again, Super Machines are THE way to go!

92

Accept no substitute:
Speedball 2 is THE futuristic sports simulation.

PROSCORE 92

"Spider-Man, Spider-Man,
Does whatever a spider can,
Spins a web any size,
Catches crooks just like flies,
Watch out, here comes the
Spider-Man!"

Whilst working in the school
science lab, mild-mannered
Peter Parker was bitten by a
radioactive spider which irre-
vocably altered his life.

Since then he's been dress-
ing-up in a Lycra body-stock-
ing and eating flies. (Ah well,
such is the way with these
strange superhero-types.)

In this, the Game Gear first
comic translation, you are
faced with five missions to
complete in order to restore
Parker's name.

The evil Kingpin has plant-
ed a bomb in the harbour and
if Spidey can't find the five
clues to its whereabouts then
it's goodbye New York
Harbour!

At last, the web-spinner
has hit the smallest
screen of all. And being a
Nineties kinda guy, he's
on a mission not only to
clear his name but also to prevent
the harbour from being irreversibly
polluted for generations to come by
disarming the bomb planted by The
Kingpin.

On his journey through New York,
Spidey encounters many of his old
adversaries and battles his way
through both them and their hench-
men on his eco-friendly trip.

Before he can begin, though, he
has to make his way to the Daily
Bugle (where alter-ego Peter Parker
works) in order to pick up his camera,
which he can use to collect evidence
to prove his innocence.

The first contact we have with our
arachnid-loving hero is a classic
piece of Marvel artwork; Spidey
swinging past a row of New York
brownstones, his name emblazoned
across the skyline in glorious red,
blue and black.

Next comes the storyboard. Stan
Lee himself would be proud of these
illustrations as The Kingpin broad-
casts his message across network
TV in his devious attempts to dis-
credit the wall-crawler.

Then it's straight into the action
with New York's Finest peppering
you with a hail of bullets as you climb
the outside of the Daily Bugle. Once
past them and into the window on the
top floor you are confronted by your
editor (gulp!) Jonah Jameson. His
beef with Spidey is apparent as he
tells you, as Peter, to go and get
some photographic evidence of
Spidey's guilt. You have other
thoughts on this matter and set out to
vindicate yourself.

The first of your forays begins in
the Dockyard Warehouse, with
you webbing-up the
thugs and then
punching and
kicking

SPIDEY



As all Mega Drive owners will now
be saying to themselves, the Game
Gear version is based on the origi-
nal MD game and not the Master
System one as you would normally
expect. Flying Edge have done won-
ders with the graphics - although the
sound is disappointing.



very
presence is
major evidence.

After having a rest
to replenish your spider-
health, Dr Strange appears,
strangely, on the scene and acts
rather... weird!

He gives you an amulet which
contains magic you will almost cer-
tainly need. It has the power to trans-
port you back to your flat for recupera-
tion when in a web-sticky situation.
Cheers, Doc!

He also informs you of your further
opponents, such as The Lizard, The
Hobgoblin and Electro (all tried-and-
tested adversaries from the Marvel
stable!) and where they are to be
found. Then it's off bad-guy-bashing

them
(and their pet
dogs) to death.

When you have suc-
cessfully slaughtered all of the
occupants of the building, your spider
sense tingles, informing you of
the approaching level guardian.

Dr Octopus is your first major
opponent and watch out, his tenta-
cles will soon sap your spider-
strength. Remember to take a couple
of snapshots before offing him, as his

SPIDER-MAN



(Left) This is one of the many story-line screens that are interspersed at the end of every level. All of these could come direct from a Stan Lee cartoon.



again, in search of those elusive evil-doers.

The graphics in *Spider-Man vs The Kingpin* are absolutely unprecedented on the Game-Gear. The only piece of software coming close is, of course, *Sonic*. The backdrops are cartoon-quality and the parallax scrolling imitates 3-D perfectly, hiding you as you pass behind sprites positioned in the foreground.

Character animation is superb. Spidey himself jives along as if he has his Walkman on, his fists and legs flying out colourfully to wallop the bad guys (themselves masterfully animated), ranging from lizard mutants to the tiny, but lethal, rodents.

The guardians' diversity is another plus-point, from Dr Octopus' tentacles to the Lizard's hang-glider, and in keeping with the rest of the game is oh-so silky-smooth.

Musically, *Spider-Man* remains professional (although I would have liked to hear the original cartoon theme tune!) with a choice of three in-game jams. Whilst not sounding

PRO TIP



Save your limited web-power for level guardians. You'll need it to obstruct their special

weapons. Once they're in a tangle, get trouncing!



monotonous, these soon become mildly distracting and, thankfully, can be turned off at the options screen.

Firing your web at either an opponent or the ceiling produces a splat noise, and jumping, punching and kicking all have the appropriate effects to sound as realistic as you can through the Game Gear's feeble speaker.

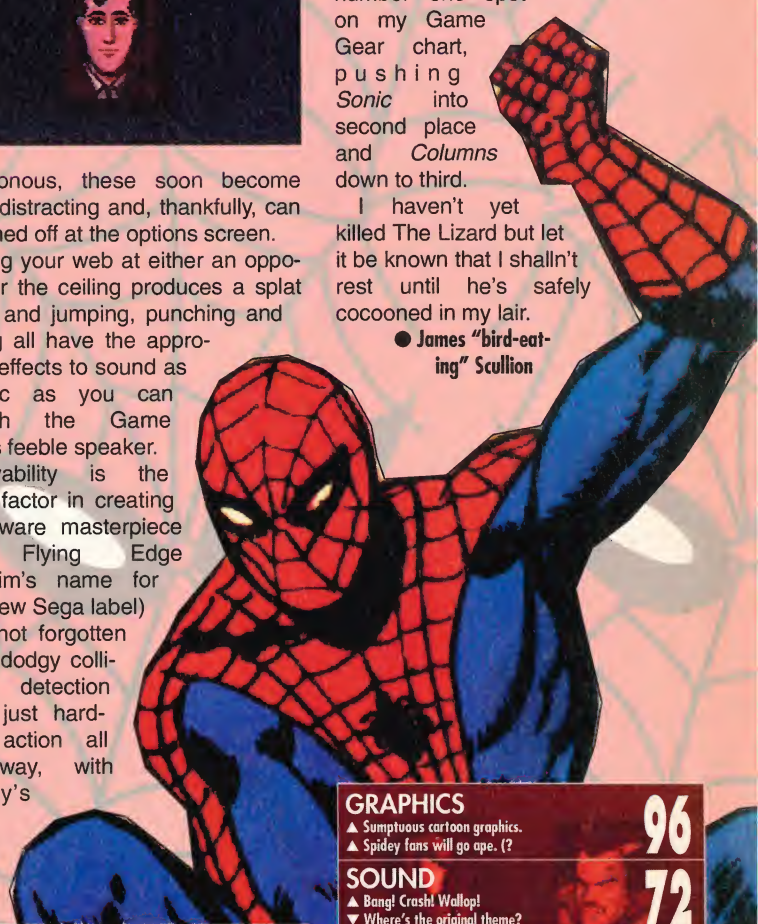
Playability is the major factor in creating a software masterpiece and Flying Edge (Acclaim's name for their new Sega label) have not forgotten it. No dodgy collision detection here, just hardcore action all the way, with Spidey's

mettle being tested on every turn.

Spider-Man jumps straight into the number one spot on my Game Gear chart, pushing *Sonic* into second place and *Columns* down to third.

I haven't yet killed The Lizard but let it be known that I shalln't rest until he's safely cocooned in my lair.

● James "bird-eating" Scullion



PROFILE	SPIDER-MAN ● FLYING EDGE ● £24.99 ● OUT JUNE
	CART SIZE 2Mbit
	PLAYERS 1
	STAGES 5
	SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES n/a	SUPPLIER Acclaim UK 4 Walcote Place Winchester Hampshire SO23 9AP (0962) 877788

GRAPHICS ▲ Sumptuous cartoon graphics. ▲ Spidey fans will go ape. (?)	96
SOUND ▲ Bang! Crash! Wallop! ▼ Where's the original theme?	72
GAMEPLAY ▲ Spidey is a wall-crawler's dream. ▲ Great feeling of swinging and crawling	95
CHALLENGE ▲ Very tough after the first few levels. ▲ Aunt Agatha hasn't completed it yet	85
Marvel-lous! Packed with great (and challenging) cartoon action.	
PROSCORE 92	



The house calls...

Bone him, Rick! This weapon is second favourite. Tops is Mr Chainsaw
Vrrrrmmmm, vrrrrmmmm!



The beasts come in three forms. The first is a shambling, drooling blood-red zombie that you can almost smell, so rotten is his car-

AVAILABLE IN
USA

pro REVIEW



come across! The designers have really gone overboard on these monstrosities. They shiver, slime and ooze their way towards Rick, bombarding you with foul secretions, and on dying, usually explode in a flood of noxious ooze. Pass me the sick bag, someone!

Pick any proficient horror flick and you have the music for *Splatterhouse*. The Addams Family have got nothing on these guys for spookalicious tunes. It sounds as if the Phantom of the Opera has been let loose on a Yamaha synth, and decided that tonight he's rockin'! There are plenty of them too, several for each level in fact, and these and the prolific scatological sound effects enhance the game plenty. Screams, gasps and inhumane screeches litter the game, and are totally over the top, but the insane giggling of the mask will really get your hackles rising!

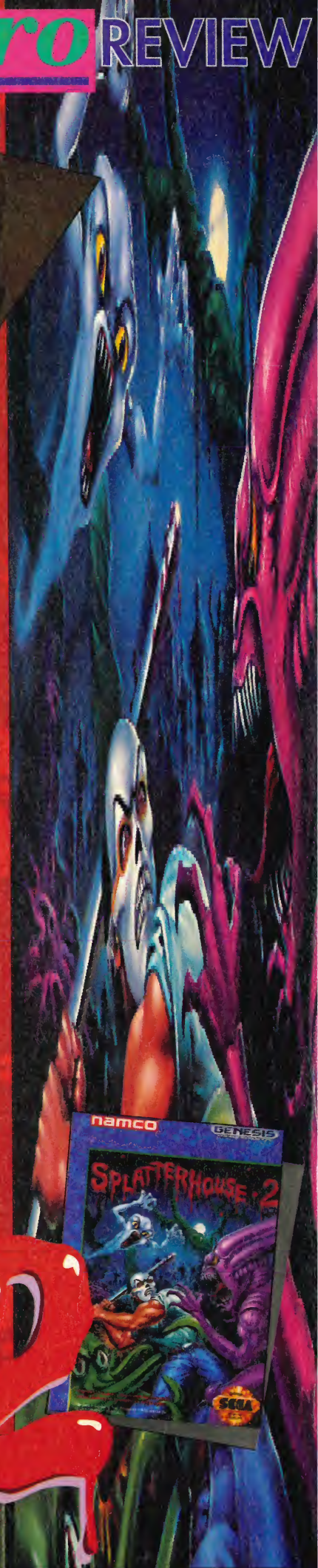
To aid your pseudo-valiant quest, there are several weapons scattered about the house, including a lead



Rick, you stink! Time for a dip in this pond! Watch out for the mutant zombie piranhas, though!



This bug-eyed apparition is the level two guardian. Check out his eyes when you've wasted him! What a scream!





These animated acid pools form themselves into haunting hunchbacks! A quick punch returns them to their original form.



The level one guardian splits open in an explosion of toxic waste. Yeuch!

pipe (ideal for those hard-to-shift zombies!), a dinosaur bone (with which you can club those distasteful apparitions into oblivion!), potassium bombs (exploding into balls of fire), a shotgun and eight shells (just right for those dinner parties!), and my favourite and yours, the trusty chainsaw (never leave home without one!). All of these are well-animated and have the desired effect of decapitating, dismembering, and otherwise destroying your misguided foes.

Timing is of the essence if you're to progress at all. The freaky monsters from Hell all seem to attack at just the wrong moment, but are fairly easy to destroy considering their lack of sensory perception. In fact,

most of them crumble at the slightest touch. The mimis, however, take a few shots before curling up, and their extending arms are lethal!

Above all, *Splatterhouse* is the first in a new style of X-rated software. Without breaking the bounds of decency (although bending them considerably), it conveys all of the nail-biting fear and loathing that's been lacking in the games market so far!

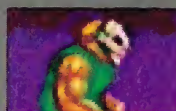
In my opinion, the do-gooders that would censor this and have us all playing *New Zealand Story* need a permanent vacation at Bates Motel, with meals supplied by the crew of the Texas Chainsaw Massacre. That'd soon shut 'em up!

● James "snuff's enough" Scullion



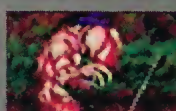
FAMILIAR CUTS

How many video nasties did you spot in *Splatterhouse 2*? Here at SEGAPRO we found a few ourselves, and here's the pick of the bunch.



Friday the 13th

Starring the lovely Jason Voorhees. The infamous mask-wearer is back, but this time he's almost a hero. (Almost!)



The Fly 2

"You're getting worse!" "No, I'm getting better!" A deliciously-slimy flick in which the offspring of a man/fly hybrid pukes on people, then digests them!



The Thing

Starring the ever-youthful Kurt Russell. With mutated dogs, deformed humans, alien craft, and sentient blood, *The Thing* was just a bit scary!



The Evil Dead

"We're gonna get you, we're gonna get you!" This charming ditty, along with "join us!" and "dead by dawn!" were sung by the zombieified cast of *The Evil Dead*.



Dawn of the Dead

Directed by the infamous George Romero! You'd better hope those bikers turn up, because they're a lot less mean than these flesh-eaters!



Hellraiser

Featuring everyone's favourite cenobite, the Pinhead! Wasn't Uncle Frank a naughty man to play with the nasty Rubik Cube? Serves him right, doesn't it!



Poltergeist

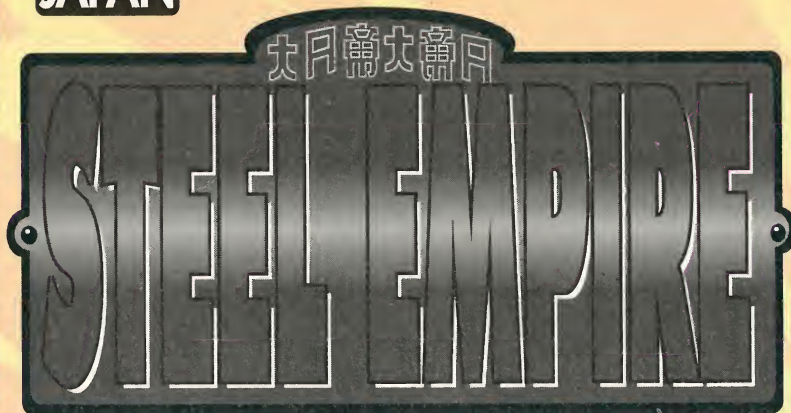
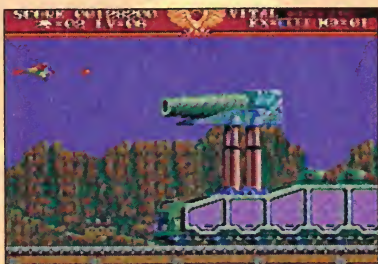
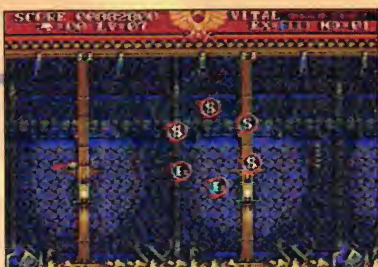
"They're here!" were Carol-Anne's fateful words! The TV people were really corpses whose burial ground was disturbed by real estate men. Unlucky!

PROFILE	SPLATTERHOUSE 2	NAMCO	£39.95	IMPORT
	CART SIZE	8Mbit		SUPPLIER
	PLAYERS	1		AMS Electronic Games
	STAGES	8		9 Hay Lane
	SKILL LEVELS	3		Kingsbury
	FEATURES	password		London
				NW9 9EL
				☎ (081) 4502166

GRAPHICS	91
▲ The most tasteless effects yet!	
▲ Totally splat-worthy, dudes!	
SOUND	87
▲ Lurch is 'kickin' it in the house!	
▲ Screamin', wailin', moanin', groanin'.	
GAMEPLAY	83
▲ Packed with monster-splattin' fun!	
▼ Slightly repetitive after a while.	
CHALLENGE	88
▲ My name is Legion, for we are many!	
▲ Guardians take plenty of shots, and are well-	

The most fun you can have with a chainsaw without getting arrested!

PROSCORE 86



On seeing *Steel Empire* for the first time, you get the immediate feeling that this is going to be a winner. The animated black-and-white intro gives you a feeling of nostalgia that took me right back to the Hindenburg disaster (what a spectacle that was!). You first choose whether to be an airship or propeller-driven plane then it's straight into the action.

As soon as you hit the game, the graphics overwhelm you. I counted

six layers of parallax in the beautifully-designed backdrops, and the artists have really worked on the sprites too! The emperor's henchmen come in all shapes and sizes, from winged bathtubs, flapping their way towards you, to monster guardians five or six times the size of the screen, that you and your kite must defeat.

The tune is suitably pompous, with plenty of brass and wind, and plays constantly throughout the game, while shots and explosions are all adequate, if not outstanding.

Control of your ship is sleek and responsive, and it's gotta be that way, with constant bombardment from all angles. You're gonna need all the power-ups the game bestows upon you too, which, happily, aren't in short supply. You start off with a measly pea-shooter and can end up with several bolt-ons, all delivering instant death!

Most surprising about *Steel Empire* is the amount of outsized adversaries you have to combat. It seems that every time you kill a couple of small guys, their mummy or daddy appear to avenge them. (And we're talking b-i-i-g parents!) This does have the tendency of slowing gameplay down quite substantially, although not in all cases, and was one of the major gripes of everyone

PRO TIP

Guardians have few vulnerable areas, which can be extremely difficult to access so make sure you've stocked up with plenty of smart-bombs.



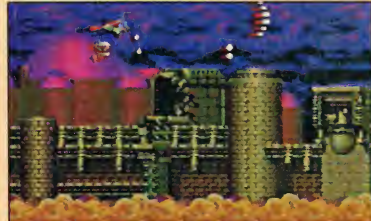
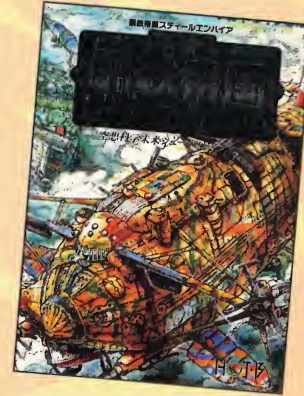
who tried it!

The biggest flaw in *Steel Empire* is the monotony. At first, the huge sprites seem so innovative (and they are!), but exterminating wave after wave of them with no variation in the gameplay soon becomes dreary and dull, outweighing the saving graces of the game. Graphics fans in particular will sing its praises, but long-term gameplay is severely flawed.

● James "aces high" Scullion

There used to be a Nemesis the Warlock story in 2000AD in which an alien race had been picking up television broadcasts from the early 20th century, and had based their culture around them. Preferring the feel of the Victorian era, their houses, transport and dress reflected this. If a computer game had been made of this, it would be something akin to *Steel Empire*. Space Age bi-planes, zeppelins, tanks and trains all make an appearance, and although having awesome fire-power, all look particularly dated. With a name like *Steel Empire* you'd expect nothing less.

You must traverse seven levels of retro-graphics, collecting power-ups and destroying the evil emperor's war machine before buzzing home for tiffin. So tally-ho, and chocks away, Biggles, old boy!



As you fly through the battle-torn remains of the city, rebel fighters zoom through the skies towards you, intent on your downfall.



THE OFFICIAL VERSION

The Japanese version of *Steel Empire* – reviewed here – is published under the Hot B label. The US version is called *Battlewings* and is published by Sage's Creation.

Flying Edge may be releasing *Steel Empire* in the UK soon. However, they feel that before they can release it, the game may have to receive a major revamp. As soon as we know the outcome, we'll be sure to tell you in the pages of SEGA PRO, and if the changes are radical enough, we'll even do a completely new ProReview of the UK version. Flying Edge say they are committed to only releasing top quality product in the UK, so be sure to check the origin of *Steel Empire* before you lash out. Remember, this is a ProReview of the Japanese version, NOT the forthcoming UK version.

PROFILE	STEEL EMPIRE ● HOT B ● £31 ● IMPORT			
	CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	
	PLAYERS	1	Console Concepts	
	STAGES	6	The Village	
	SKILL LEVELS	3	Newcastle-under-Lyme	
	FEATURES	n/a	Staffordshire	
			ST5 1QB	
			©(0782) 712759	

GRAPHICS	85
▲ Massive level guardians.	
▲ Dated feel is well-captured.	
SOUND	75
▲ Competent in-game sounds.	
▼ Terrible theme tune.	
GAMEPLAY	72
▲ Smooth shoot-'em-up action.	
▼ Ain't boredom just the pits?	
CHALLENGE	60
▲ Smooth shoot-'em-up action.	
▼ Ain't boredom just the pits?	
There's a really good game in here somewhere.	
PROSCORE	72

"The bases are loaded! We're in the bottom of the ninth, and Chicago have two outs! The Babe steps up to the plate. The pitcher checks the bases, and throws! It's a wild swing by the batter, and, wow! The ball's travelling high into deep centre field! It's going, it's going, it's gone! Home run!"

Sports Talk Baseball is the second in a potential series of sims (following *Joe Montana II*) which have the added bonus of a (live!) commentary throughout. Also included in this package are the complete 1991 stats for every US team, incorporating over 500 pro ball players! So batter up, and hit that cowhide right outta the ballpark - or hang your head in shameful defeat!

SPORTS TALK BASEBALL

Baseball games are becoming more and more realistic as time goes on. How well I remember playing a flickering Spectrum version for weeks non-stop with anyone foolish enough to sit down and play me. More recently I've been dabbling in *TV Sports Baseball* on the Amiga (sorry, but someone has to keep the dust off it), which, although similar to this in graphics and gameplay, is absolutely annihilated by the superb sampled speech that just does not stop throughout the whole game! The quality is such that it takes the game far above and beyond any baseball sim that has gone before!

The commentator is clearly-spoken and has a massive array of sentences and phrases, and during play you become unaware that it is just a collection of samples.

Instead, you're at the stadium yourself, playing against the very latest professional players, while in the background, the chatter goes on! Compared to the sampled speech in *Super Monaco II*, for instance, well there is no comparison!

After the obligatory digitised into screens, and the plentiful options, you're in the game. There's no time to blink, as the opposing pitcher immediately unleashes a fast ball right at you! There are two main views during play, and the pitching/hitting is the first. Your huge sprite stands in the foreground facing the pitcher, while the first and third bases are portrayed by insets to the left and



Batter up! Hitting the ball is far easier than the real thing (which, as any true fan of the sport will tell you, requires plenty of skill!). Just take a swing at it at the right time, and it'll be sent flying!

right of the action. Walloping the ball effects the transition to the second view, which is an aerial shot of the whole ballpark! The ant-like fielders scurry around marvellously, desperately attempting to catch the ball, while your players run around the diamond, hoping for the home plate! A scanner sits in the bottom right of the screen, and informs you which bases are loaded, enabling you to decide just when to steal a base! All animation is high-quality and every bit of the display is packed with colour. The teams all wear their authentic strips, clearly visible even during the aerial shots!

The sound, speech apart, complements the game perfectly. The ball being hit, the crowd cheering, and the home run jingles, to name but a few, really transport you to the real thing (where's my hot dog and coke, Ma?). The samples are the real rave throughout, and are so well interlaced with each other that the joins

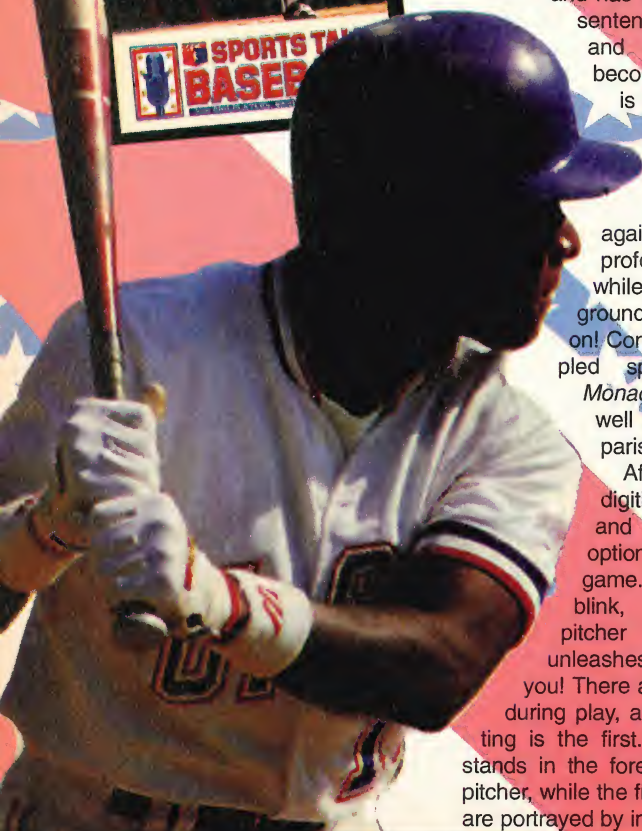
PRO TIP



Pitchers: slow balls are far more effective against the batter than fast balls; add a touch of curve at your own discretion!

Batters: don't swing at everything that the pitcher throws your way. Slow balls and balls off the plate should be treated with caution as missing them will always result in a strike.

are totally imperceptible! (Unlike the speech in *Joe Montana II*!) The old guy supposedly uttering them appears periodically, and is good for a laugh as he knits and unfurls his





Slide, Charlie Brown, slide! Sports Talk Baseball has many features which you'll pick up as you progress, such as sliding to base, stealing and several pitching variants.



Bases one and three are loaded, so the pitch better be a good one, or someone's gonna score!

brow with juvenile excitability.

Gameplay is as good as any yet, with the exception of the fielders. I found them to be rather slow in comparison to other baseball games, and although this is my only real gripe, it really interfered with my fielding innings. Saying that though, they perform excellent jumps and dives for the ball, and that almost makes up for their sluggish running abilities!

As for difficulty, well, the computer is, as always in these cases, a superb exponent of the bat 'n' ball



game, and will give you a tough fight whichever teams you choose — he's even been programmed with such fineries as stealing bases, and double or even triple plays! Home runs are more a matter of luck than skill, but are class events. Scoring one gives you a full-screen scrolling message, and a huge ego-trip to boot!

On the whole, Sports Talk Baseball is a highly polished, highly playable game with just a couple of small flaws. Baseball fans will go ape over it, as will sports sim fans in general. I can't wait for STB 2!

● James "Willie Mays"

TAKE YOUR PITCH!

Choose to play indoor or outdoor, on real or artificial turf, by night or day, and even how loud the audience roar! High/low fences (for home run hits!) and defense/offense specialities are also catered for!



AVAILABLE IN
USA

pro REVIEW



Scullion



GRAPHICS	85
▲ Tastefully animated sprites.	
▼ Outfielders are rather tiny.	
SOUND	98
▲ Will this guy ever stop talking? Hope not!	
▲ Cool FX complement the yapping!	
GAMEPLAY	79
▲ Adheres closely to the real sport!	
▼ Quirky (and slow) fielder control!	
CHALLENGE	89
▲ Computer plays like the Red Sox!	
▲ Two-player mode is much easier.	

A baseball game that's real fun to play — unlike watching the game...

PROSCORE 84

PROFILE

SPORTS TALK BASEBALL ● SEGA ● £39.95 ● IMPORT

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 162
SKILL LEVELS infinite
FEATURES battery, versus

SUPPLIER
AMS Electronic Games
9 Hay Lane
Kingsbury
London
NW9 9EL
©(081) 4502166

SUPER FANTASY ZONE

AVAILABLE IN
JAPAN

MEGA DRIVE

If you have a marked aversion and a strong prejudice against little round space ships with wings who live in a technicolour world called the Fantasy Zone then you will applaud the Dark Menon Force. This invasion group of planetary pillagers and wreckers have decided that the Fantasy Zone would look much improved if someone (ie, them) concreted over the purple pleasant land and killed off all the refugees from Sesame Street who inhabit it.

However, those unsporting creatures have decided to send their hero Opa Opa to halt the Menon Force in its tracks. Fat chance, mate! Still, he does look well 'ard with those add-on boosters and industrial lasers but against the mighty guardians of the Dark Menon Force (large echo) he hasn't a chance - has he?



One can say the graphics on Super Fantasy Zone are bland, on the contrary they reach out from the screen and literally tear your eye balls from their sockets. Vivid colours ooze from every area of the screen and the general standard of the backgrounds is excellent. Your first glimpse is of a rainbow-coloured title screen which rapidly cuts to stunning statics outlining the plot. The animated sequences look almost as good as a CD, and that's no lie. Visually it's very similar to the original and the characteristic cuteness is still present but the standard of sprites and host

kin is extremely satisfying to crack open. There are also some clever touches, such as the giant flying fish which sucks you in and the seemingly impregnable laser porcupine.

Unfortunately, the annoying gap between the collision and actual explosion is still alive and kicking and this was the only gremlin that really made me mad.

Each level is accompanied by a cracking good tune and there are admirable spot FX and jingles throughout which

PRO TIP Having troubles with the first guardian? Just go to the shop and buy two sets of cluster bombs. If you fly immediately above him when he appears and drop both sets of bombs on his heads, he will explode saving you the hassle of destroying him with lasers.

complement the goofy action. My main criticism is that SFZ is way too similar to the first. It's all good fun for a few hours but the appeal soon wears off and what you are left with is a standard shoot-'em-up with some pretty graphics - but this is not enough to keep it from falling into obscurity.

● Damian Butt



of add-ons make SFZ a whole new experience. The guardians are huge, and I mean really big, covering half of the screen and all requiring precise tactics to destroy. In particular, the monster



The parts shop is where you can purchase everything from a cuddly toy to a heavy duty laser or an extra life. Be prepared for inflation, even Norman Lamont can affect the prices in Super Fantasy Zone.

PROFILE

FANTASY ZONE	SUNSOFT	£35	IMPORT
CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER	Kingbit Games
PLAYERS	1		9 Caledonian Road
STAGES	10		Haymarket
SKILL LEVELS	3		Edinburgh
FEATURES	n/a		EH11 2DA
			©(031) 3379610

GRAPHICS	90
▲ Psychedelic, man!	
▲ Guardians are colourful; great intro.	
SOUND	86
▲ A plethora of jingly jangly tunes.	
▲ SFX are consistently vibrant.	
GAMEPLAY	81
▲ Fast and sometimes furious.	
▲ Still some annoying collisions.	
CHALLENGE	79
▲ Progressively tough and varied levels.	
▲ You may soon get bored.	
Still bursting with the original's wacky dress sense and playability.	
PROSCORE	80

Maintaining his full-tilt, maximum overdrive work on SEGAPro leaves "Seve" Butt little time to play one of his favourite weekend activities, golf.

Many a day earlier this year you would have seen "Butter" on his local course polishing up his putting or slogging the ball in the general direction of the flag. Now this popular sport that attracts the largest prize money and the most tasteless clothes is out for the Game Gear.

You may select a variety of characters to play with, your caddy and whether you want to practise, play against a friend or battle the ruthless computer. Each hole is scrolled over from flag to tee-off mat before you can begin; this helps you to familiarise yourself with the hazards and safe zones. Then it's time for would-be Palmers and Faldos to show off their expertise and yellow plus fours.

All too often games based on golf are crammed with so much detail and authenticity that the actual game becomes unplayable. Happily, this is not the case with *Super Golf*. But there are no less options than normal to simplify play, in fact some extra innovative features do away with the boredom and make the game real fun to play.

For instance, you can select your own caddy. Each has a different personality and gives useful advice. In

PRO TIP Getting the maximum power on the scale takes practise. Once achieved, the screen flashes to indicate overdrive. This is sometimes the only way to clear a lake or bunker. So use the training mode to perfect it.

addition, all the graphics are presented in cartoon style, with every player having a real character. Then there's the tunes which play during a game. These are very lively, yet are still tolerable after many hours play. There are also many little congratulatory tunes such as when you get a Birdy or an Eagle which add sparkle



You have 25 golf balls to allocate between the attributes for each player. This is a very useful feature as it allows players poor at a certain area to boost their character's skills to compensate.

Secondly, the graphics are not exactly digitised. They are drawn in the inimitable Japanese style, with large eyes and vivid features. This doesn't detract from the realism, though, as all this is made by the varied courses, with trees and bunkers, and things like the slope of the ground and the

PROFILE	SUPER GOLF	SIGMA	£24	IMPORT
	CART SIZE	1Mbit		
	PLAYERS	4		
	STAGES	18		
	SKILL LEVELS	1		
	FEATURES	n/a		
SUPPLIER				
Console Concepts				
The Village				
Newcastle-under-Lyme				
Staffordshire				
ST5 1QB				
☎ (0782) 712759				



Stuck in the bunker? Got sand between your toes? Don't worry because a little chip will take you directly onto the green. Even the wind is light.



direction of the wind. All of these are essential elements, and their accurate implementation – as seen here – can make or break a golfing game.

The only disadvantage with *Super Golf* is that it only contains a single 18 hole course. This may not be

SUPER GOLF

to the game.

The many natural obstacles that litter the rough area of the course all have substance, so that a tree may ricochet your carefully aimed ball in the opposite direction. The varying degrees of rough all affect your ball's movement and power so that even in a game that is essentially action, realism is still important.

Realism is something that may not be immediately apparent with *Super Golf*. For a start the view is from above, not the conventional first-person perspective as seen in games like *World Class Leader Board Golf*.



Before you take any shots, be sure to check the state of the wind. Here it shows that there is a five mph wind running from left to right. This shouldn't be too much of a problem.

Look at the distance you wish to hit the ball and then judge which club you should use. The six iron chosen here will take you around 150 yards if used at full strength.

enough for dedicated enthusiasts, although the graphical and sonic memory trade offs are certainly worth sacrificing. Above all, *Super Golf* makes a relatively tedious game fun and enjoyable.

● Damian "Putt" Butt

GRAPHICS	80
▲ Finely drawn and smoothly coloured holes.	
▲ Realistic animation; comical characters.	
SOUND	83
▲ Great chirpy tune to raise your spirits.	
▲ FX such as ball swipes and splashes.	
GAMEPLAY	88
▲ Very easy to pick up and play.	
▲ Overhead view makes a change.	
CHALLENGE	79
▼ Only one course reduces lastability.	
▲ The computer's a tough cookie.	
The original approach makes <i>Super Golf</i> a curiously addictive change.	
PROSCORE	84





Opinion as to the worth of MS *Super Kick Off* was radically divided between two warring factions. There were those who believed it was more playable than any other MS game (except *Sonic*) and broke new boundaries on the 8-bit machine. But a significant voice argued that, in fact, it was massively flawed and shouldn't have received such high ratings. I have to say that I was more inclined to the latter group because, despite the many reviewers' and playtesters' over-zealous ravings, I saw some quite blatant game-play flaws.

Now the GG version flops onto the mat and it really seems to bury any past criticism. US Gold have managed to cram everything in, with some of the options actually geared to the smaller screen. Faster, smaller but better than ever before, GG *Super Kick Off* will score with everyone.

SUPER KICK OFF

PRO TIP Tempt the goalie. This is achieved by dribbling up to him to draw him out, then dodging round and shooting into an open goal.

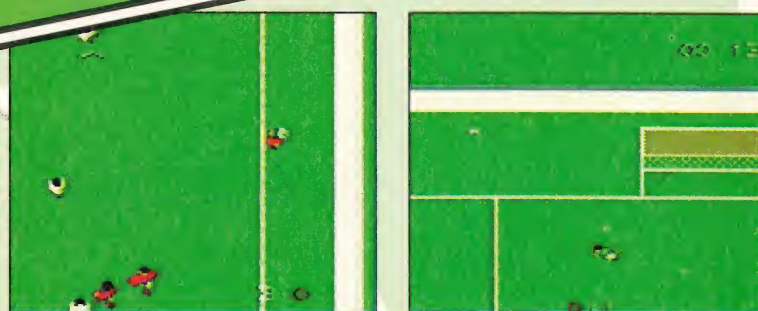
The big question is whether or not *Super Kick Off* on the GG will be a direct port from the MS, and if so, will it inherit its predecessors flaws?

Obviously, with such a small screen, the graphics are bound to be small, but *Kick Off's* were already small to begin with. The result is that the action can be unbearably painful to the eyes as the tiny sprites zip all over the pitch with lightning moves that sadly suffer from speed blur. Players be warned! Long sessions on *Super Kick Off* will not only give you a squint but could give you a serious headache.

US Gold have given the options a Jane Fonda work-out to fit into the GG's smaller screen. Many memory-wasting screens have been axed, but the options are still as comprehensive as ever. Now they are displayed on a central menu with sub screens where applicable. I commend US Gold on a game that has at least been tailor-made for the GG.

The changes aren't just on the presentation, though. During the game, you don't get a scanner anymore, which not only gives a better play area, it also undoubtedly speeds up the gameplay. Also, the whole game doesn't stop for the Injury Time message, which was another fault with the MS version. Finally, and thankfully, the control method is a great improvement on the MS. Now it's easy to trap and dribble the ball, and goal scoring is also more fair with the goalie fumbling and easily deceived.

The only thing that seems to have



been copied directly from the Master System is the sound. The tune and effects weren't too good on the MS and fail to excite here, but in a football game, they never really carry any importance anyway.

GG *Super Kick Off* just goes to show that a Master System game can play a terribly lot better on the Game Gear if a bit and thought goes

Most of the onscreen information has been lost in the GG version, but you are still told what the score is and how long is left on the clock. It's good to see the back of the scanner, because it only slowed the game down and got in the way of the action.

into the conversion. While the merits of the Master System game were dubious, there's no doubt the GG *Super Kick Off* is in a league of its own.

● Damian "still kicking" Butt



GRAPHICS 74
▲ Extremely fast.
▲ Tweaked for the small screen.

SOUND 54
▼ Corny footballing tune.
▼ Elastic band effects are sad.

GAMEPLAY 91
▲ Massively playable from the start.
▼ Eye strain could deter long plays.

CHALLENGE 90
▲ Very tough computer opponents.
▲ Plenty of teams provides variety.

The best football game for ANY Sega - so far.

PROSCORE 90



PROFILE

KICK OFF ● US GOLD ● £34.99 ● OUT FEB

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2 Link-up
STAGES n/a
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES teamplay

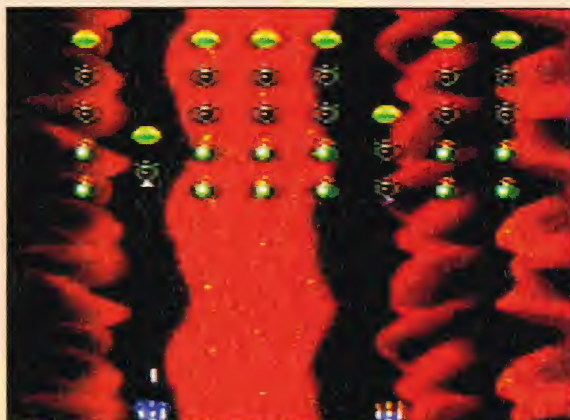
SUPPLIER
Unit 2/3 Holford Way
Holford
Birmingham
B6 7AX
£ (021) 6253366

Ah, there's no doubt about it, the souped-up *Space Invaders* is supported by an incredibly display of graphics and sound that is practically unknown on the Master System.

For a start, the options and high score table are laid out on a gorgeous backdrop of spinning stars and a complicated mechanised cockpit. The intro is innovative and may fool you into thinking the game has crashed, even the simple entry of your name in the table is also originally implemented with a spinning alphabet and a laser to zap the letters.

Even this impressive introduction cannot prepare you for the visual feast that makes up the actual game. *Super Space Invaders* really is just

SUPER SPACE INVADERS



some of the best you'll ever see on the Master System. Domark have got to be congratulated for turning what could have been a dreary, tired formula into something hugely playable and enjoyable.



Super Space Invaders they meant the enemy, not the game. The only thing they missed out on the aliens were the blue tights and red capes. Get my drift?

● Damian Butt

that, super, with every level converted from the coin-op in fine style and detail. I was amazed at the standard of some of the sprites and backdrops such as the satellite, lava flow and



dark clouds. The sound, for the most part, consists of alarms and weird dolphin noises, but I'm disappointed to learn that there is no speech.

Gameplay is cranked up to the max by the astoundingly addictive simultaneous two-player mode, with a host of testing and original super-weapons and radical formations never before seen – it makes *Super Space Invaders* one of the most playable games around. You only have to try taking on a multi-layered swarm of bad guys with a field of asteroids raining down on you to see what I mean.

The only problem with all the *Space Invaders* clones, including this one, is that the action may become a tad repetitive after sustained sessions. It can also be totally ruthless and very hard, when they said it was

As you sat down to watch the omnibus edition of *EastEnders*, equipped with your "uppers" to stop you going into deep depression, the aliens invaded. Forget Sunday trading, the extra terrestrials respect no worldly laws and promptly drop four billion tons of landing craft metal on us. The only craft left to swiftly deal with the threat is a cranky, space-going Austin England with a dodgy paint job.

You embark in *Maverick 6* (as it is affectionately known) for hostile space to gradually destroy wave after wave of 2-D space craft with the occasional guardian thrown in. Only through a combination of spectacular super weapons, high technology and blind luck will you survive to meet... their leader.



PROFILE

SPACE INVADERS ● DOMARK ● £29.99 ● OUT JAN

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 12
SKILL LEVELS 3
FEATURES teamplay

SUPPLIER
Domark
Ferry House
51-57 Lacy Road
Putney
London
(081) 7802222

GRAPHICS 85
▲ Stunning animated backdrops.
▲ Incredibly fast and imaginative aliens.

SOUND 71
▲ Atmospheric tunes and sound effects.
▲ Lack of suitable explosions and no speech.

GAMEPLAY 86
▲ Two-player offers the ultimate carnage.
▲ Slick and fast with some new twists.

CHALLENGE 83
▲ More stages than *American Gladiators*.
▲ *Invaders* concept may wear a little thin.

If you thought *Space Invaders* was dead, think again – this is a '90s game.

PROSCORE 84

ON THE TENTH DAY...

... of Christmas Domark gave to me:

★ Two Pit-Fighter T-shirts in a pear tree.

Claire "Virgin Mary" Edgeley of Domark then asked:
Where am I going skiing next year? (She's a strange girl...)

A Corfu B France C Wales

See page 75 for more details and official competition entry form.



Jump into the driving seat and make sure that your seat-belt is particularly secure because this is going to be the bumpiest ride of your life! Even bouncier than Gert Buckett, this is *Super Off Road*.

One or two players compete against several computer opponents for cash prizes in four laps of no-holds-barred motorised mayhem. There's a huge selection of tracks, all of which will test your endurance and physical stamina, so you'd better be fit and ready.

It ain't gonna be easy, with hazards ranging from massive pot-holes to deeeeeeep water! To help you, money and nitro boosters are scattered around the courses and you're gonna need them.

So hold on tight, slam it in gear and go, go, go!



Below: okay you pig-boggers, put the pedal to the metal and let's burn! The computer trucks will show you the route if you're unsure. Very useful, as this track's a bit obscure. Miss one bend and you're gonna be a lap behind, and outta the race!



Below: Can you fandango? Hope so, or it's the pits for you! Bone-jarring bumps and potholes galore are gonna have your cab dancing all around this circuit!



Straight from the wicked intro screen you know that this is going to be balls-out driving, so stop your grinnin' and drop your linen; *Super Off Road* is a *Super Sprint* clone with a difference. The vehicles you'll be piloting are jacked-up open-back trucks, and the course is a dirt track full of jumps, bumps and hazards galore!

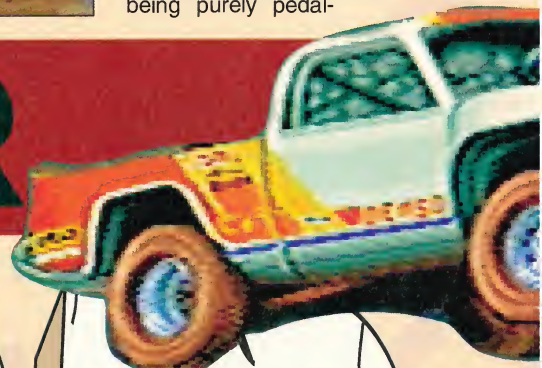
Competing against three opponents, you have to come in third or higher to qualify for the next race. Having done so you are awarded fiscal remuneration by well-endowed young ladies for your efforts then it's off to the parts shop. Nitros are an essential purchase but also on offer are better tyres, shocks, acceleration, and top end extension. All of these can be built up over several races, except nitro boosts which, as you can imagine, are rather depleted after each race. If the worst comes to the worst there is a continue option, which craftily cuts back on your additions, forcing you to fight your way back up to your previously well-endowed status.

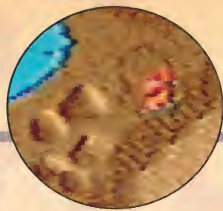
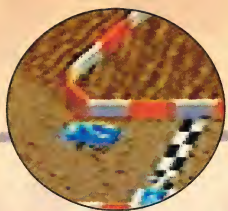
Although being rather small, the trucks are exceptionally good-looking. They bounce around the course in a similar fashion to the real thing, although hacking into a rival has a similar effect to bumper cars, with the two of you rebounding backwards, and neither being written off. These things must have Volvo parts!

The forced perspective courses are planned with thought, some being purely pedal-

SUPER

OFFROAD





PRO TIP

Make sure you don't use all of your nitros too early, as you'll be flagging in the latter half of the race. Best thing to buy in the speed shop other than nitros is acceleration. This gives you the obvious advantage of an early lead and allows you to recover quickly if you get disorientated.



PROFILE

SUPER OFF ROAD ● BALLISTIC ● £29.95 ● OUT JUNE

CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER
PLAYERS	2	Accolade Europe
STAGES	8	Bowling House
SKILL LEVELS	1	Point Pleasure
FEATURES	n/a	Wandsworth
		London SW18 1PE
		(081) 8770880



Above: the Huevos Grande awaits! Water really hinders your progress, so pick your route carefully.

This bag of swag means you can still go shopping even if you lose! Ten grand is added to each successive wad!

Launch yourself off these whoop-de-do's and you could find you've aerially overtaken your adversaries, stunt-man style!

Yellow is about to find out just how much the water slows him down. Take the right line to avoid a similar fate!



The red car and the blue car had a race! (Sing to the tune of the Milky Way advert.)



Top of the status box shows the elapsed time from the start of race.

Each respective car's lap number is below this.

And bottom shows just how few nitros you have left (hard luck, red!).



Above: get yer speed here! Spend your bucks wisely, or you'll find yourself floundering!

to-the-metal material, while others require a modicum of brain power to be navigated safely and speedily. They're rather colourful too, a garish red and white crash barrier keeps you within its dirt-laden confines, and the sandy-coloured pot-holes and table-tops are all well-defined. The spectators are a bit of a let-down, being just blocks of various colours, but you're not going to be spending much time looking at them with the next hairpin coming up, are you?

The up-tempo country and western track playing



throughout just adds to the realism. It's really what you'd expect at this kind of gig, and being Damian's favourite kind of music it had him whooping and slapping his thighs whilst square-dancing around the office (yee-haar!). The sound effects only occur at particular times in the race, such as hitting a water hazard, or firing a nitro. But there's no engine noise, which would have been nice. This may be a minor gripe but realism is an important factor in this style of software.

Talking of realism, these babies handle just like their bigger brothers, although are a mite more difficult to roll (in fact it's impossible!). The computer drivers are real pros so a burst of nitro and some cool corner-cutting will keep you in pole position.

Super Off Road really brings out



● James "Iron Man" Scullion



GRAPHICS	86
▲ Realistic blimp-type view.	
▲ Realistic blimp-type women.	
SOUND	76
▲ Country fans will be in raptures.	
▼ No vroom-vroom noises.	
GAMEPLAY	88
▲ Just like the dodgems.	
▲ Very easy to get into.	
CHALLENGE	87
▲ Computer-driven cars are aggressive.	
▲ Successive levels are progressively difficult.	
A real rough 'n' rumble racer - brilliant two-player mode.	
PROSCORE	88

TASK FORCE

HARRIER
EX

"Hey, comrade! All I did was try to invade all the countries around Russia then launch some TU-190 bombers for world-wide devastation, and all of a sudden the allies are declaring war. If that's not bad enough, a single Harrier Mk5 has been systematically destroying all my lovely new tanks and some of those nice looking MiG things. What a liberty! I paid good money for those, just to have some hoity-toity, gonad-brain pilot drop bombs on them. Well it's just not on. So to teach them goodies goodies, I'm throwing everything but the kitchen sink at them. Let's see that Harrier survive against those odds. Ha ha ha."



AWACs attack as a massive plane with a radar on it blocks your progress through the skies of stage seven. Let your outriders do the damage.



When a game has a whopping 8Mbit cart you expect graphics and sound on a par with *The Immortal* and more levels than is normal. You certainly do not expect such a torrid and abysmal looking game as *Task Force Harrier Ex*.

There are a few redeeming features, such as the excellent sequence showing the take-off and some of the challenging guardians, but there is just not enough to keep an average gamer happy for more than a few hours.

There is a half-hearted title screen with all the usual options but giving the choice of up to five lives plus four continues is a mistake, there are still not enough difficulty levels for long-lasting challenge. I must confess to never noticing the many tunes that droned on in the background. My opinion is that if they don't grab you by the throat instantly, they should not be there at all.

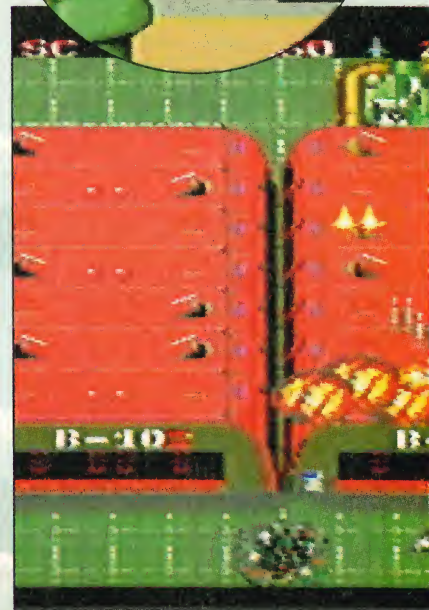
Each mission is brought to life realistically with a briefing from an animated commander and a cute little wave from your fiancée.

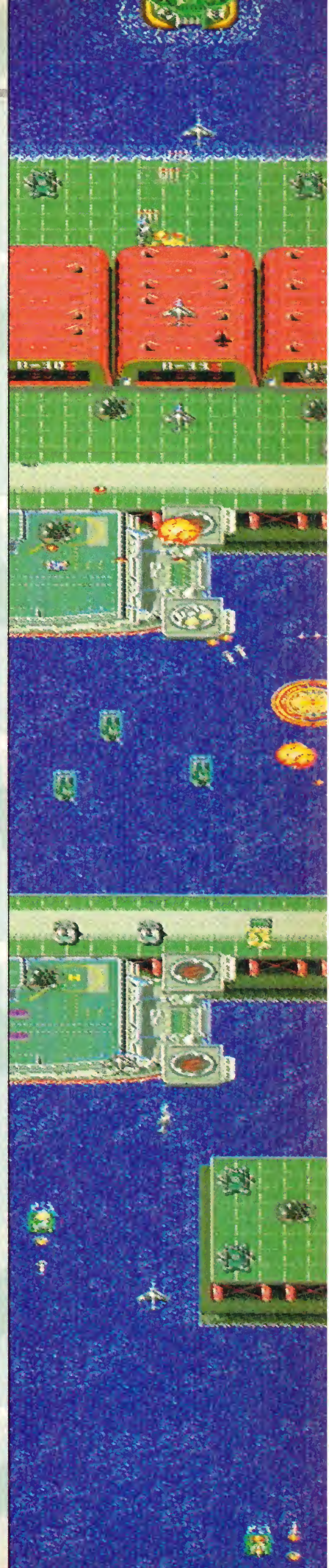
As far as the graphics are concerned, well, I'm extremely disappointed. More suited to the Master System, some of the sprites, like the tanks, are tiny and badly animated. The first three levels are practically identical and a snowy Siberia is not exactly the most aesthetic place to set a shoot-'em-up.

I thought the later levels were

bound to jazz up, but alas not. The cities and supply depots all look like faded photos with ground-based weapons merging into the scenery, causing many collision detection problems.

Speech is limited, but a compelling feature nevertheless.





ertheless. Seldom have I heard such clear pronunciation (unlike *Vapor Trail*) and it definitely spices up the gameplay. I wish the briefings could have been given over the radio instead of just printed. The in-game effects, however, are worthless; there is not one speaker-busting sound and half of them are totally unconvincing, such as a little blip for a volley of rockets.

When you see the screen shots with full screen guardians, *Task Force Harrier Ex* promises much, but when you actually play it, delivers little. The vast majority of sprites, ranging from the jets to the SAMs

and helicopters, are very jerky, unconvincing and unoriginal. The only innovative piece of hardware is the shuttle riding on the back of a bomber, but even this was short lived as all the guardians are incredibly easy to defeat. Either the Japanese are terrible at shoot-'em-ups or they see the us Europeans as soulless, button-bashing cripples with no gamesplaying talent.

You have to be supremely bad at shoot-'em-ups to fail with so many bombs and chances. The end result is that *Task Force Harrier Ex* is far too easy. A complete waste of an 8Mbit cart and definitely not worth the money.

● Damian "VTOL" Butt

Brrr... It's getting cold now as you enter stage five and the Siberian zone.

GRAPHICS	71
▲ Large, forbidding guardians.	
▼ Sketchy levels, no authenticity.	
SOUND	75
▲ What music?	
▼ The best speech on the MD.	
GAMEPLAY	68
▲ Initially fun to play.	
▼ Enormous game scope is wasted.	
CHALLENGE	64
▲ Completed on the second go.	
▼ It needs at least 50 levels!	
Let down by deficient graphics, sound, game-play and challenge.	
PROSCORE 62	

PROTIP

Get the powered-up rockets ASAP as they provide a blanket cover of shrapnel and fire that should protect you in the midst of a fire-fight. This is particularly useful on level five where the enemy has air superiority.



Your total score so far in the game.

The number of lives you have left.

Smart bombs: useful for destroying some of the more agile enemies.

The game stage you are currently trying to complete.



The considerably larger enemy plane just waiting to be blown to smithereens.

You in your diminutive craft, unleashing a flurry of missiles.

PROFILE	TASK FORCE HARRIER	●	TRECO	●	£35	●	IMPORT
	CART SIZE	8Mbit					SUPPLIER
	PLAYERS	1					Console Concepts
	STAGES	13					Unit 18
	SKILL LEVELS	3					The Village
	FEATURES	n/a					Newcastle-under-Lyme
							Staffordshire ST5 1QB
							©(0782) 712759

Tasmania is not exactly brimming with edible plants and animals. And that's why our eponymous hero is off on a quest. His missus is giving him an earbashing and the brat's bawling too! What can he do to fill their aching bellies, not to mention his own!

Well, legend tells of the fabled giant Tasmanian seabird, and its enormous egg! Drooling at the very thought of it, he sets off across the island, in search of the biggest potential omelette of all time!

Spinnin' like a twister, he stomps through villains from the hit Warner Bros cartoon series, including Bull Gator, Francis X and the Bush Rats. Snacks lie littered around to keep his strength up, and red hot chilli peppers serve a more violent purpose! Just DON'T eat the bombs, Taz!



Boxes come in real handy when a poor ol' devil just ain't got the strength to climb! Placed strategically, they can allow you access to just about anywhere!

PRO TIP



Sensible devils should be warned off eating bombs. Wacky devils, on the other hand, should eat as many as they find! Why, because it's a giggle, that's why!

the background is as cracked as crazy-paving, and dry as a bone (I had to go and get a drink just from looking at it!), while the foreground consists of craggy rocks to painfully snag your fur on!

Taz himself is a wonder to watch. He moves just like his cartoon counterpart, his facial expressions are particularly noteworthy! He runs, jumps and even performs whirlwinds, and coming across



We got numerous American versions of Taz Mania. The first came from Console Concepts at The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759. It was swiftly followed two hours later by one from AMS Electronic Games at 9 Hay Lane, Kingsbury, London NW9 9EL. Tel: (081) 4502166.

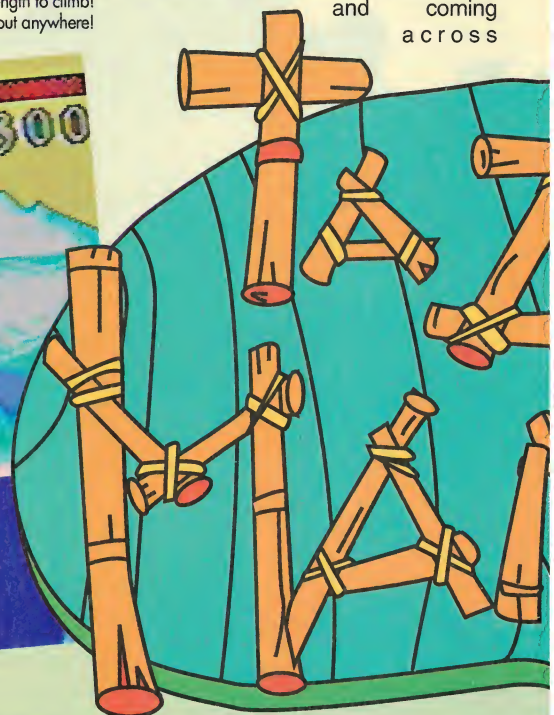


Bugs Bunny!

Taz has got himself hitched, and the animated intro tells the all-too-familiar story; marry in haste, repent

at leisure! Only with a baby devil to look after, Taz hasn't got any leisure to repent at! All he wants to do is sit back and smoke his pipe, but instead he's got to trudge all over the island looking for an egg that may not exist!

The adventure begins in the Badlands, an arid place with not an oasis in sight! The scorched earth in

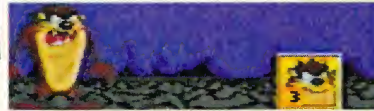


AVAILABLE IN

 UK



These guys are intent on flattening you!
 To waste them, just jump up and down on the
 roof! Don't try this at home, though!

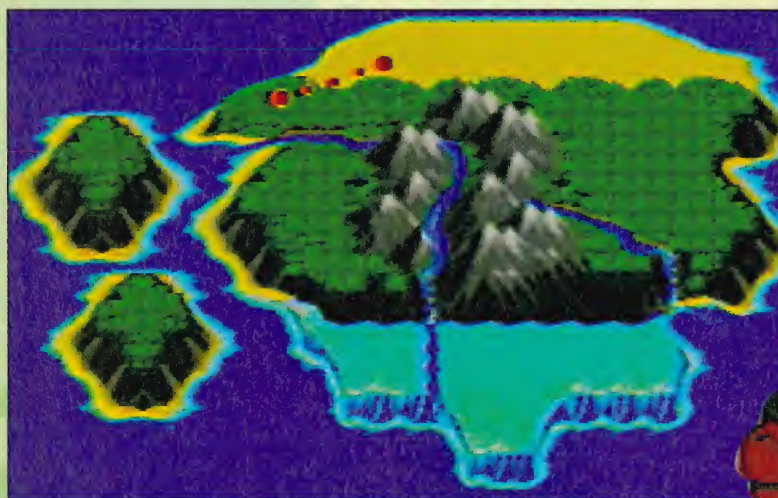


anything vaguely edible (including
 some bad guys!), throws it into his
 cavernous maw! If left static for any
 length of time, he throws one of his
 famous tantrums, jumping up and
 down with fists waving, uttering gut-
 tural growls of boredom, as if to say,
 "c'mon you wimp, get on with it!"





Alright, geyser! These water-spouts are both beneficial and malevolent! On the up side, they can transport you to higher levels, while on the down side, they're lethal to the touch unless you're standing on the correct part!



Welcome to sunny Tasmania! Unlike the real island, this parallel isle has every single weather condition known to man! Desert, tropical jungle and arctic conditions are all packed onto this picturesque but puny rock!



Play areas are large and complex, so it's lucky there are pointers to direct you. Milestones are mega-useful too, as these are restart points when death rears its ugly head! Stars make Taz invulnerable for a while, and chomping the occasional photo (of which there are two varieties), gives you extra lives or continues. Eating bombs is a scream, as you explode internally, leaving you

scorched à la toons! Bad guys include rock monsters, bug-eyed freaky spider-crabs, and massive Venus fly-traps, and can all be eaten!

PROFILE	Tazmania ● SEGA US ● £39.95 ● OUT JULY		
	CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER
	PLAYERS	1	Sega UK
	STAGES	7	16 Portland Road
	SKILL LEVELS	3	London
	FEATURES	n/a	W11 4LA C (071) 7278070



Level guardians come in the form of old adversaries, and attempt to curtail your search by driving over you in pick-up trucks, but are relatively weedy compared to your devilish strength!

The music, as you'd expect from a game of this calibre, is wild 'n' wacky, and straight outta the cartoons too! All of the usual freaky noises are here in plenty, and it's honestly easy to believe you're watching TV, such is the audio-visual treat. The only thing missing is Porky Pig poking his head through at the end and stuttering, "th... th... th... th... that's all, folks!". The twister noise, tantrum growls, and many more and varied sound effects just add and add to the fun, and had us all in the SEGAPRO



offices bawling with laughter!

Playing Taz involves plenty of quick brainwork and nimble finger-work, especially when he's twistin'. The only niggle I had was that his jumping wasn't as controllable as I would have liked, but, to be fair, it feels as if this was done purposefully (after all, you wouldn't want to complete Taz the day you got it, would you?), and you'll just have to get used to it, won't you!

The levels get progressively harder as Taz makes his way across the nutty island, and this allows you to get the feel of the problem in hand before jumping in and tackling it!

Taz Mania is, without a doubt, one of THE games of the Nineties! The Mega Drive is being continually pushed to new heights of excellence, and with software of this quality, it's obvious to everyone (even poxy Nintendo owners!) that Sega's 16-bit machine is THE console of the Nineties! I'm talkin' to you!

● James "Taz Maniac" Scullio

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Superlative quality sprite animation!
- ▲ Varied backgrounds add to ambience.

94

SOUND

- ▲ Cartoon tunes all the way!
- ▲ Loads and loads of far-out effects!

93

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ More obstacles than Sonic (sorry, Sonic).
- ▲ But rather slower than the spiky one.

91

CHALLENGE

- ▲ No way complete in a day!
- ▲ Like an up-hill struggle, alright!

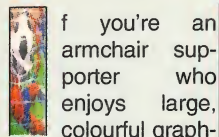
94

Taz holds months of wacky wanderings in his hairy paws!

PROSCORE

93





If you're an armchair supporter who enjoys large, colourful graphics, smooth animation and a fair dose of playability then Tecmo *World Cup* will satisfy you. However, if you are a bit more choosy about the games you buy then you will instantly discover this game's main fault, accuracy – it does not have any.

There are some redeeming features, the response time is very fast and complicated volleys with the final back flip into the net are easily learnt. There is also some excellent collision detection, especially around the goal mouth where fair decisions make or break the match.

The graphics are great but the sound is dire. The whistle and tackle effects are irritating and there is a truly tortuous, grinding tune that does not complement football at all.

PRO TIP When you get right up to the goal and there's only the goalie to beat, walk one way and then quickly flick the ball in the opposite direction and into the top corner of the net.



Compared to the coin-op, which I play regularly, there's no speech or zoom-in facility

and the programmers have even neglected to include a replay of goals. On any sports games, seeing your glory moment over and over again is half the fun.

Unfortunately, the general pitch action is slower than such greats as *Super Kick Off* and the strange perspective makes scoring difficult, and with the absence of aftertouch the



number of shooting angles is severely reduced.

With *Super Kick Off* arriving later this year, Tecmo *World Cup* will soon be booted into touch.

● Damian "Boot" Butt

GRAPHICS	78
▲ Large smooth player graphics.	
▼ No replays, zooms and bland title screens.	
SOUND	21
▼ Appalling effects.	
▼ Similarly depressive tune.	
GAMEPLAY	83
▲ Terrific in two-player mode.	
▲ Highly addictive during long matches.	
CHALLENGE	80
▲ The cup is significantly hard to attain.	
▲ Head to head is always appealing.	
No frills, no rules, just basic football – a short-lived attraction.	69
PROSCORE	

Well it's certainly taken its time, but at last there could be a decent football sim on the Mega Drive (World Cup Italia 90 is very old and not that good).

Tecmo *World Cup 92* is converted from the arcades, where it was originally Tecmo 90, which made sense as the last World Cup was in that year (not 1992!). Anyway, it provides any aspiring Linekers with the chance to play a head-to-head match or take part in the World Cup against the world's best teams.

With *Super Kick Off* hopefully arriving soon, can the horizontal format compete against the successful overhead view?



TECMO WORLD CUP '92

PROFILE	WORLD CUP 92 ● TECMO ● £38 ● IMPORT		
	CART SIZE	2Mbit	SUPPLIER
	PLAYERS	2	Console Concepts
	STAGES	World Cup	The Village
	SKILL LEVELS	5	Newcastle-under-Lyme
	FEATURES	versus	Staffordshire
		ST5 1QB	
		©(0782) 712759	



"In the year of darkness, 2029, the rulers of this planet devised something that felt no pity, no pain, no fear. Something unstoppable. They created... The Terminator!"

These rulers were machines. Controlled by Skynet, an intelligent computer system, they were programmed to believe that humans were too inefficient to live, and therefore had to be entirely eradicated from the system. Most died in the ensuing holocaust, but some survived to become members of an elite guerilla army, dedicated to the overthrow of Skynet.

One such soldier was John Connor. Known to the machines as a leader, Skynet developed a plan to destroy him by sending a terminator back in time to kill his mother before he was born. The rest as they say is history... or the future, depending on your point of view.

pro! Yo!



Reese goes exploring here as he runs around the underground complex looking for the reactor.



No screen of Arnie taking his eye out but the statics you do get between levels are exactly like scenes from the film. Left, Reese hits the deck after travelling through time.

s the original Terminator theme tune welcomes you to the stunning intro picture of Arnie himself (complete with leather, pistol and obligatory wrap-around shades!), it becomes instantly apparent that this is going to be a monster of a game! While it's belting out, the picture alters to a gruesome scene of the carnage wreaked by the machines. Corpses and skeletons litter the battlefield in a macabre fashion, the unfeeling automatons crushing the bodies under-foot (or under-track!) without recognition.

After choosing your skill level, of which there are four, and customising your joypad set-up, it's straight into the action! You control Kyle Reese, guardian of John Connor, who must destroy the Terminator complex and then escape back in time to save John's mother, Sarah.

The first thing you notice about Reese as he traverses the hostile terrain is his wonderful animation. He runs in a totally realistic way, arms and legs pumping throughout the game, and is perfectly coloured in combat olive, with some astounding detail in both Mega and Master versions. Before his mission begins, he

TER



Reese takes to the rooftop to reach Sarah at the Tech Noir bar, before you-know-who makes an appearance. The police don't die, they just lay down when you shoot them. Travelling via the rooftops is the safe route, but watch out for the helicopters.



This is an example of the wonderful animation, Reese vaults over this bin at high speed.



Take out this HK (Hunter Killer) with your grenades before going underground. Watch out for the laser blasts.



PROTIP

While you're on the surface of the planet, collect as many sticks of dynamite as possible.



Otherwise you may run out when underground, and venturing to the surface halfway through your mission is tantamount to suicide!

PROFILE

THE TERMINATOR ● VIRGIN ● £TBA ● OUT JUNE

CART SIZE 2/8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 4
SKILL LEVELS 4
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER

Virgin Games
338a Ladbroke Grove
London
W10 5AH
0(081) 9602255

ARNIE ON GEAR

Playing the MS version of *The Terminator* on the Game Gear through the Master Gear converter is pretty tough. Even though the graphics look absolutely superb, they aren't very practical. The bullets tend to be very small and thus frustratingly difficult to spot.

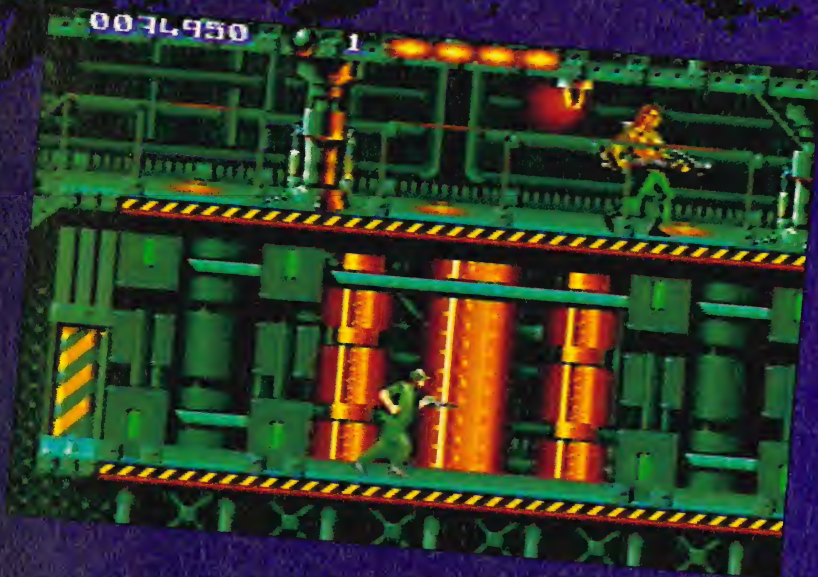


The programmers, Probe, are working on a Game Gear version which should be released in July/August through Virgin. They promise that this will not be a straight conversion, and all the graphics will be redesigned for the smaller screen. If you've got a Game Gear, we recommend you wait for the proper version.

THE

MINATOR

MASTERING THE TERMINATOR



You have found the reactor, so drop a bomb and get the hell out. You have 45 seconds to reach the time displacement equipment before you become toast with all the other Terminators.

one above another, presented side-on. The maze-like structure must be battled through until you reach the power supply, which you'll have to blow up with some dynamite found on the surface. This is in scarce supply so don't bother wasting it on indestructible doors. Several guardians await the intrepid Reese, including reprises from the surface monsters. This level has a fixed pattern, and once completed, becomes easier on subsequent ventures.

Level two is a search for Sarah Connor through the streets of Los Angeles. You are greeted with a superb static of Kyle as he emerges from the future, and then the action resumes. Battling your way to the Tech Noir nightclub for your confrontation with Arnold, you encounter both police and punks intent on halting your progress. To get past them, you must blow them away with a 12-gauge shotgun. This is concealed within your grey coat, and the animation involved in revealing it is nothing short of magnificent! The punks can be totally wiped out, but due to paranoia in the USA and Europe (particularly Germany), the cops can only be temporarily stunned, and even when blasted several times in the head with your shotgun, will rise up to shoot back. Sad, but true!

The in-game music is a blend of hardcore techno-horror and up-beat cyberdreams vibrations, and only helps to enhance the gripping gameplay. All of the sound effects are totally authentic, and include rifle shots, grenade and dynamite explosions, and 600rpm machine guns.

On the playability front, both Mega

Drive and Master System versions are really easy to get into, and will hold your attention for a hell of a long time. The Master System version is by far the toughest of the two, and does take some time to get the hang of.

On the Master System, there's no film licence I know of that touches it for graphics, playability, and adherence to original storyline. As for the Mega Drive version, it's just a superior platform shoot-'em-up! And choosing between them? I'd plump for the MD version, but before I receive death threats galore from indignant MS owners, the only reason I say this is that I'm a bit of a wimp and I found the 16-bit version to be slightly easier. Either way, everyone has been waiting ages for the Sega version of *The Terminator*, and be assured that it has DEFINITELY been worth the wait. Stop what you're doing and get this game!

● James "I need your clothes!" Scullion

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Static pics are digitised quality.
- ▲ Character animation is superb.

94

SOUND

- ▲ Original tune is easily recognisable.
- ▲ Plenty of deadly effects.

92

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Fast moving, violent fun.
- ▲ Well-constructed play area.

90

CHALLENGE

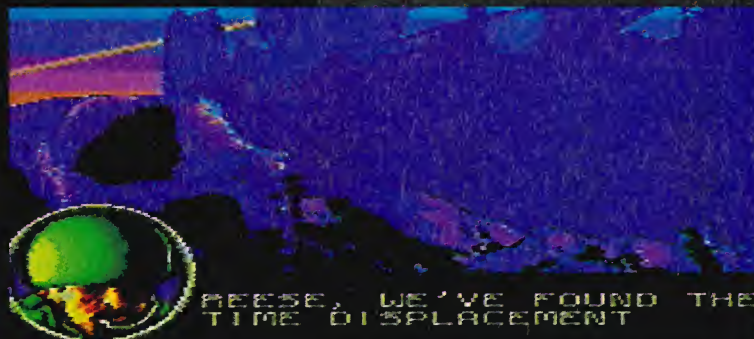
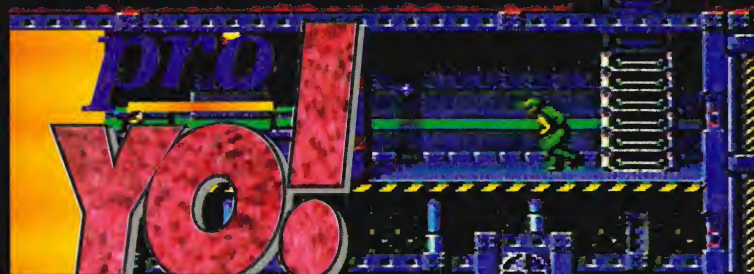
- ▲ Cops are strangely immortal!
- ▲ Try killing Arnie on level two!

89

Killtastic! Top-notch platformer. The SEGAPro team was hooked.

PROSCORE 92

MASTER SYSTEM



REESE, WE'VE FOUND THE TIME DISPLACEMENT



GRAPHICS

- ▲ Excellent atmosphere with dark backgrounds.
- ▲ Superb detail and colour in the Tech Noir bar.

93

SOUND

- ▲ A brave attempt at the theme tune.
- ▼ Effects are a bit crispy.

83

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Very involving on all levels.
- ▲ Packed with loads to do at all times.

89

CHALLENGE

- ▲ The toughest Sega version.
- ▼ Only four levels, though.

93

What a game! Never before has a licence been so faithfully converted.

PROSCORE 90

Toki first appeared on the home computers last year through a terrific licence from Ocean, and now he's back to fight the jungle battle all over again.

Toki's story is a sad, but strangely familiar one. Toki, or Tom King as he was known, was walking hand in hand through the forest one day when all of a sudden one of those evil, oppressive types jumped out from behind the bushes and snatched his young girl.

"Okay", Tom mumbled to himself, "a butch lad like me can get girls at the drop of a hat - this is no hardship." But on hearing this, the kidnapper decided to turn Tom into a gorilla and thus finish his girl-hunting days for good.

Stuck with being banished to a life of celibacy or rescuing his old girlfriend and rectifying his unfortunate condition, Toki trudges off in search of the ogre...

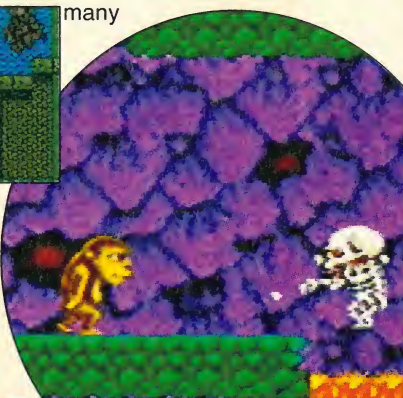
Due to Toki's generous options, it is very hard not to make any progress. You can have up to nine lives and seven continues, and the temptation to choose them all is irresistible. You can even choose at what point you receive the extra lives. While choosing these, you can also hear any of the 17 pieces of music. Each of these is used on a level and its guardian, making each section have an individual atmosphere. The sound effects, though, are poor with some appalling speech.

Graphically, Toki looks just like the arcade machine, even down to the gorgeous shimmering effect on the underwater level. Most of the backgrounds have several levels of parallax scrolling, and really enhance the feeling of being deep in a jungle or whatever. The characters you meet along the way are varied and superbly coloured, particularly the fire dragons that hatch out of eggs. The level guardians are very large, but criminally easy to beat.

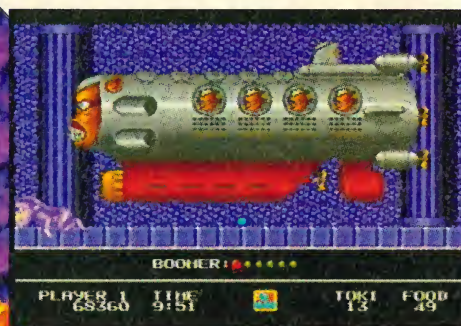
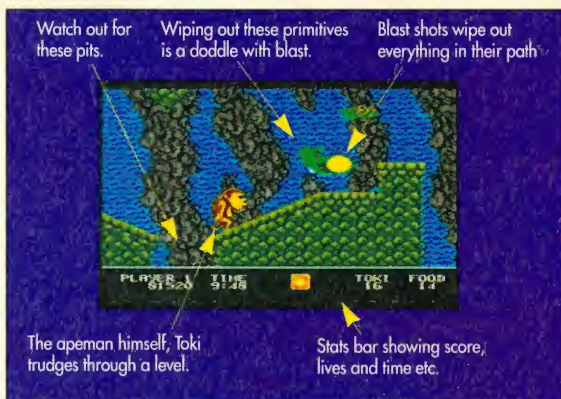
The ease with which you can progress is Toki's main fault. The combination of the

many lives, continues and dopey enemies makes this a game that you will soon complete. The graphics and sound are mostly above average and although the simplicity is Toki's only fault, it is a severe one. When you start playing, you really want to complete this game, but once you have done so, you never want to play it again - and at £35 that's not good value for money.

● Les "Apeman" Ellis



GRAPHICS	84
▲ Same great background effects.	
▲ A wide variety of original enemies.	
SOUND	80
▲ 17 differing pieces of music.	
▼ Mediocre effects and lousy speech.	
GAMEPLAY	86
▲ Combination of platform and shooting.	
▲ Very rewarding to play.	
CHALLENGE	62
▲ Great for novice players.	
▼ No challenge for the experienced Pro.	
A sound conversion, but it is far too easy for most MD players.	
PROSCORE	78



And I thought the Beatles must have been stoned to come up with a Yellow Submarine, how about one with a face that is full of ugly creatures. Toki, you'll believe that an ape could swim.



Toki is a strange enough name in itself, but did you know in Japan people call this game Ju Ju Legend (and that's the version we reviewed). Another "strange but true" fact is that the American name for the game is Toki Goes Apespit. When this game finally comes to the UK it will probably be known as plain and simple Toki, just like the home computer versions.

PROTIP Look before you leap. On most of the levels, when you come to a ledge and can't see where to go, try looking up and down first. This will probably reveal a sneaky platform or even some kind of bonus icon.

PROFILE	TOKI	TAITO	£35	IMPORT
	CART SIZE	4Mbit		
	PLAYERS	2		
	STAGES	9		
	SKILL LEVELS	4		
	FEATURES	n/a		
		SUPPLIER		
		Kingbit Games		
		9 Caledonian Road		
		Haymarket		
		Edinburgh		
		EH11 2DA		
		(031) 3379610		

THUNDER FORCE IV

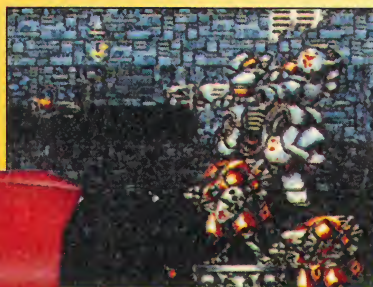
MEGA DRIVE

The Styx fighter has had its most recent refit, and not before time too! The Empire of Lone are mustering their forces for their biggest offensive yet, and it's up to you, pilot brave, to halt them in their tracks. The leaders of the Galaxy Union have put all of their considerable workforce into designing an all-new Styx, with greatly enhanced speed, manoeuvrability and, most importantly, shot-power.

Previous prototype models had vaporised under the sheer intensity of the laser's heat, but new technologies have brought us the joys of the Thunder Force mark IV!

This time, you've seven hostile planets to visit, and must destroy the Empire's war machine on each, or face a grim future as one of the many slaves under the merciless Empire of Lone!

The Thunder Force story, as far as Mega Drive users are concerned, began with *Thunder Force II*, an arcade conversion (the first being arcade-only!). Shooting everything in sight, you had to swap your weapons frequently to counteract the diversity of the alien hordes, while careening headlong towards the level guardian in an eight-directional scrolling extravaganza! *Thunder Force III*, although a gorgeous game, was



Watch out for the wickedly quick level guardians! They're lightning!

more traditional fare, as the scrolling was horizontal-only. New additions to the series were a speed control with four settings, and the ability to

choose your start level.

Thunder Force IV has taken these con-

BACK SHOT

Rather useful for picking off those creeps that try to fly up your impulse engines!

BLADE

Big 'n' meaty, the blade wipes clear a path for you through any alien debris!

CLAW

These drones rotate around your hyper-alloy body, and protect you from hyper-alloy piercing shells!

FREE WAY

Was the name of the dog belonging to the Hart family in Hart to Hart (and remember Max?).

HUNTER

Heat-seekers galore await the proud owner of these little beauties!

RAILGUN

A porky-fat laser wings its way horizontally across the screen, and takes out everything in its path!

SHIELD

Okay, you want invulnerability? You got invulnerability! But it don't last too long!

SNAKE

Streams of well-behaved time-bombs flow into your wake, and explode in any follower's face!

TWIN SHOT

Rather basic, but better than your normal firepower. Get it if there's nothing better going!



AVAILABLE IN
JAPAN

pro REVIEW



This is the first half of level six. NOT easy, we can tell you! A constant barrage of alien bombs, bullets, and general shrapnel assaults you as you simply try to survive!



"Rocky Mountain High" sang John Denver, but we're sure he never realised just how high! Some sharp reactions are needed in this high-speed, low-level flying stage.



Wo-ow! Aliens galore in this death-fest extravaganza! Beware, this game is tough!

cepts on board and expanded on them. The speed control is now controllable down to percentage accuracy, and the stage select has been simplified too!

A comprehensive configuration screen allows you to select your engine power, mission difficulty, ship stock and starting level, as well as allowing you to test the several excellent tunes and effects.

The graphics are the best you'll see on a shoot-'em-up as yet! Colourful and large, the most astounding thing about them being their diversity! From Water Worlds to Desert Planets, from Outer Space to Inner Space, and each with its own 57 varieties of blood-thirsty mutant scum! The aliens themselves attack in a seemingly-random fashion, but after several games a pattern does seem to emerge. They're lovingly chiselled in the most abhorrent colours possible, and all have a hungry grin on their slaving chops! The backdrops are technicolour multi-level parallax, but so finely done are they, that it could be straight 3-D you're watching!

As you zoom over the landscapes, maiming and destroying everything that passes in front of your crosshairs, the sound that assaults you is simply phenomenal! A multitude of Japanese rock tracks hammer out their chords throughout the action, and really get the adrenalin pumping. The sound FX are by far

the best to appear in a shoot-'em-up, and include some really crazy laser sounds, explosions, fatal-wound screams, and the obligatory sampled speech, which gets more and more frantic as the game progresses!

I found it just as tough as the previous Thunder Force game, as Styx after Styx bit the dust in a shower of neutrinos. The levels are larger and more complex, and require far more thought to navigate. Weapon choice is of paramount importance, as

THUNDER FORCE: A HISTORY



THUNDER FORCE

This oldest (1983!) only appeared in the arcades, but without it we'd never have had the sequels!



THUNDER FORCE II

This MSX grandpappy (1988) was the forerunner of the Mega Drive.



THUNDER FORCE II

And this here's the MD baby itself (1989), much better indeed.



THUNDER FORCE III

The super spiffing Sega TF 3 (1990). The best shoot-'em-up of its time!



THUNDERFORCE AC

Here's the arcade version of TF 3. Copied straight from the MD!

choosing the wrong power-up at the wrong time invariably proves to be the last thing you ever did! Power-ups themselves are to be found in two types of location. Some can be found on the surface of the planet, while others are carried by enemy craft, which must be obliterated before you can claim your prize.

Thunder Force IV has proven itself to be a great follow-up to an excellent series of games, and a classy stand-alone too! A huge 8Mbit game, with months of Empire-destroying entertainment locked inside its silicon-based universe! Roll on Thunder Force V!

● Araki "high-flyer" Kazuya

PROFILE	THUNDER FORCE IV ● TECHNOSOFT ● £40 ● IMPORT		
	CART SIZE	8Mbit	SUPPLIER
	PLAYERS	1	Game World
	STAGES	7	Unit 54, Trading World
	SKILL LEVELS	3	131 Broadway
	FEATURES	level select	Bexley Heath
			Kent DA6 7HF
			(081) 2980226

GRAPHICS	93
▲ Intriguingly detailed throughout.	
▲ Monstrous mix and level grandeur.	
SOUND	91
▲ Vivid interstellar tunes.	
▲ Multitudes of wild FX and some tasty samples.	
GAMEPLAY	92
▲ The most playable Thunder Force yet!	
▲ A superb weapon select method.	
CHALLENGE	94
▲ Attackers get more intelligent as you progress.	
▲ May be too tough for beginners.	
It was worth the wait. Thunder Force IV, come on down.	
PROSCORE	92

Wrestling has become seriously popular over the last few years, and a world-wide fascination continues to grow for this weirdest of sports! Extremely fat and extremely muscular men are paid massive amounts of money to dance around a ring cheek-to-cheek, wearing next to nothing. In years gone by the wrestlers called the shots, but now, with big money at stake, the most important member of the team is the choreographer, and everything is pre-planned to look good and hurt as little as possible!

Luckily, this is not the case with computer wrestling. Players are urged to become as sadistic as they can, with the sole intention of inflicting as much pain on the opponent as is legally permissible!



Above: submit, submit! Never! Not even if you break my back! Crunch! Ouch! Okay, I submit!

I'm not particularly fond of wrestling, but seeing as Les (a real fan - he whistles all the tunes) usually gets to enthuse about anything WWF, it makes a change to get a review from an impartial observer. In fact I find the whole rigged set-up rather farcical. I am aware, though, that the "sport" does have a huge following, and that plenty of fans await a good computer simulation of their fave rave. WWF, the definitive grapple game from Acclaim, will be hitting the Mega Drive in the autumn, but for now the action centres around the trickle of clones that are making their way from Japan.

Powering up, you are presented with the rather spartan options screen which allows you to configure your joystick to your favourite position. There are four modes of play: World Championship, Exciting, Elimination and Handicap. One player can face a single opponent or a tag team, and two players can wrestle each other or team up themselves against a computer duo.

Choice of player is from a bank of 12 nicely-drawn but suspiciously familiar-looking chaps (I'm reliably informed that these guys are straight outta the WWF), and the logo in the centre of the ring, HWF, is a blatant rip-off too!

Graphically it's a let-down. The visuals are straight out of an 8-bit machine, with low-res, jerky characters, and a lifeless backdrop. The referee roams the ring aimlessly, and the audience is made up entirely of semi-animate clones. Visual effects are few, but the bounce-off-the-ropes move is worthy of a mention, as is the ability to fight outside the ring.

The music isn't half as bad as the gameplay, with 20 fast 'n' furious Jap-rock tracks to choose from. It's the kind of music set to the action sequences in Jackie Chan movies. The in-game sound effects are limited to a few grunts, groans and crunches, which, unfortunately, are for the most part inaudible above the music.

Control is exceptionally fiddly, and not helped by the Japanese manual. There are several moves you can pull on your adversaries, including what look like a half- and full-nelsons,



Above: As the legendary Eddie "It's a Knockout" Waring once said: "It's an up-and-under!"



Top: okay sucker, are you ready for my super surfin' bellyflop?
Above: haw haw! Obviously not, Mr Skinny. Try some crash weight gain. Les swears by it!



boston crabs galore, and several types of throw, kick and punch, plus some pretty illegal-looking ones.

Thunder Pro is quite a challenging game, not only because of the Japanese instructions, but also due to the computer being a well-practised exponent of the grip-'n'-grapple game. You'll need plenty of training before you can beat him, and that's



Dave "Eat-em-alive" Perry says "Grrrr! I'm tough, I am!" Don't argue or he's liable to cry!



Les "The Mask" Ellis does NOT use steroids! Makes you wonder just how he got those pecs, though.



Damian "Scowling" Butt pumps iron 12 hours a day - but what else does he pump?



James "Beefcake" Scullion is trying to change his image. And boy does he need to!



Richard "King of the burgers" Monteiro has just acquired his own ex-Hollywood dietician!



Dom "The Bomb" Handy warns of the dangers of drugs. "Look what they did to me!"

AVAILABLE IN
JAPAN

pro REVIEW



The Mystery Reviewer just won't take off his mask! "Then you'd know who I was" he (or she) quips.



Andy "Nails" Smales eats children for breakfast. More like jelly babies, we say!



Di "No Messin" Tavener's speciality is the rabbit punch. We don't recommend you try it!



Melanie "Melons" Turner has one ambition. To thrash the Buttster out of the ring (and into bed)!



Di "Bite it off" Monteiro is the other half of the infamous tag team: The Mont-heroes



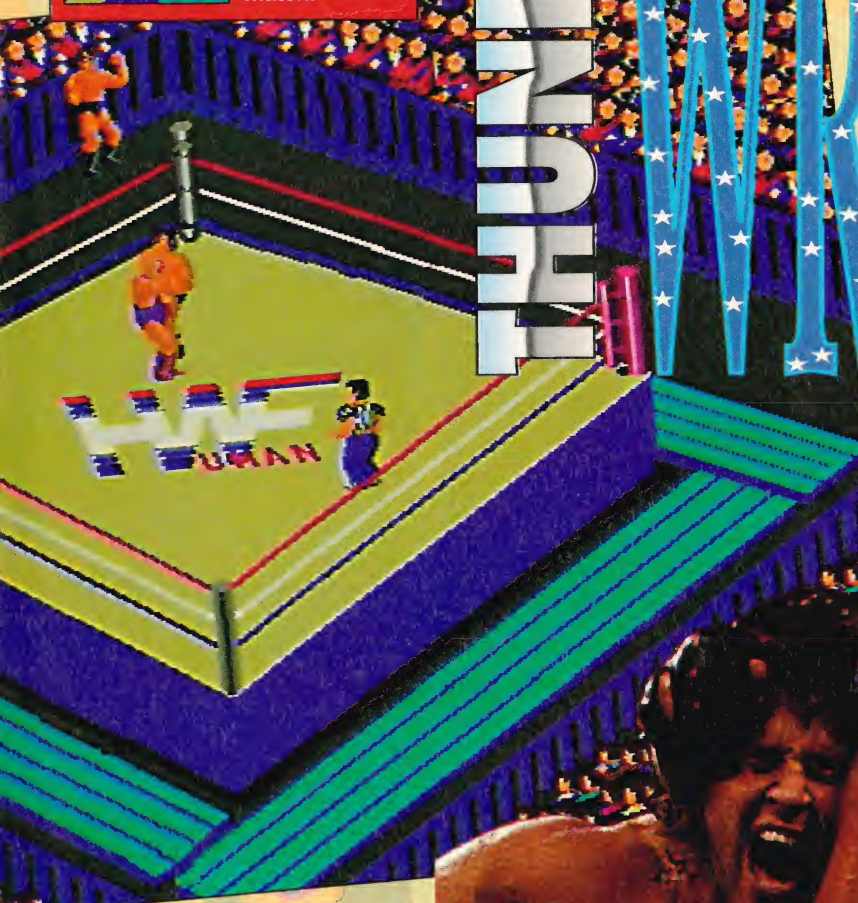
Dominik "The Waggler" Diamante is obviously a pseudonym. What is his true identity? Who knows!

PROTIP

If you're fighting out of the ring, get back in before 20 seconds have elapsed or you'll lose the match.



THUNDER PRO WRESTLING



Ringside: tag partners goad each other outside the ring while Les "Bend me, shape me" Ellis gets his hair messed up by Damian "Aerial Kick" Butt!



Above: check out the goose-stepper to the left! While he's stompin' around outside the ring, his opponent craftily wins the match!



after you've worked out what button does what!

With several wrestling games already out, and more to follow, including the long-awaited WWF, *Thunder Pro Wrestling* can only be described as an also-ran in the wrestle-'em-up stakes.

● James "McManus" Scullion

PROFILE	THUNDER PRO WRESTLING ● HUMAN ● £32 ● IMPORT			
	CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	Kingbit Games
	PLAYERS	2		The James Thin Building
	STAGES	11		57 George Street
	SKILL LEVELS	3		Edinburgh
	FEATURES	teampay, versus		EH11 2DA
				?(031) 2257682

GRAPHICS
▼ We've seen better on the Master System.
▼ Mega jerky; simple ring graphics.

55

SOUND
▲ Some respectable tones.
▼ But they overpower the meagre effects.

65

GAMEPLAY
▼ Control method is impossible to grasp.
▼ Just one or two half-decent moves.

45

CHALLENGE
▲ Computer opponents are tough.
▼ Challenging, boring.

70

No sparkle and no life in this poor excuse for a wrestling challenger.

PROSCORE 57

Following the example set by Valis and Annette, girls are breaking into console games in a big way. The latest two female stars are two battle-hardened women under the command of Colonel Patch. The Colonel has received information that the good Prince Eldon, the most popular member of the Royal family, has been kidnapped, and unless the kidnapers' demands are met, he will be unceremoniously slaughtered.

The country has a strict policy of not giving in to the demands of kidnapers, even when the life of a prince is at stake. But all is not lost, because the Colonel has decided to send his top two undercover operatives, Madison and her sidekick Crystal, to "dispose of" the kidnapers and rescue the prince.

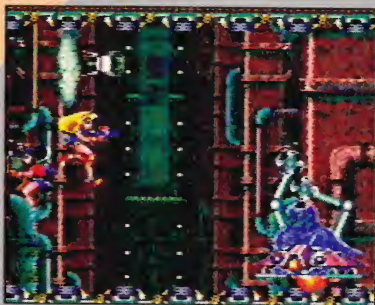
Two girls rescuing a prince? Well, it makes a change.

This is certainly a game packed with humour, but be sure to get hold of an English version or you may not understand what's going on. The Japanese version of *Trouble Shooter* is called *Battlemania*, so be sure you know what you're getting.

As the Sega logo fades into the normal power-up screen, along come the two teenage girls in their red car to spin the logo on its end. This sets the tone for the whole game; it's a shoot-'em-up with an attitude. Then you get to meet the girls, Madison the dominant leader and Crystal resplendent with blue-rinsed hair!

The options screen allows you change the pad configuration, pick from three tough difficulty levels, and hear any of the 100+ sound effects. Sadly, there's only one uneventful tune that drones throughout the game.

Before you enter each game, the Colonel pops up onscreen and after being mildly surprised at the girls' young age, briefs them on their mission and the need for secrecy. This little animated conversation is a neat feature and sets the tone for your mission.



LIGHTNING STORM
HIGH-POWERED FIELDS OF
ELECTRICITY THAT SPREAD
OUTWARD AT RANDOM ACROSS
THE SCREEN.



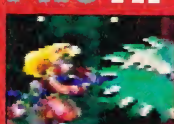
This is the garage where you can choose which special weapon you take with you in your back pack. All the weapons take time to charge up so use them sparingly.



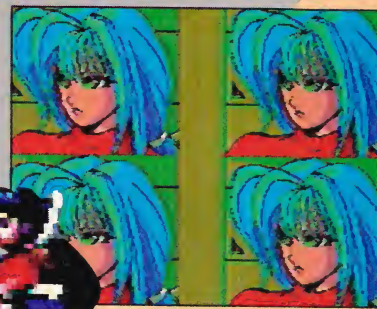
You are then taken into the garage to equip yourself. The graphics here are great, with loads of detail and colour on the weapons add-ons. Crystal gives you a commentary on the use of each weapon, and why you should choose carefully as each one is suited to a different environment.

The main part of the game is very similar to *Forgotten Worlds*, although you control two people at once, not just one. The two girls "float" across the screen with weapons packs on their backs. Each character is packed with detail and colour, conveying the big-eyed, bushy-haired statics of the intro. The girls each wear a different coloured outfit, so it's easy to tell them apart. The enemy

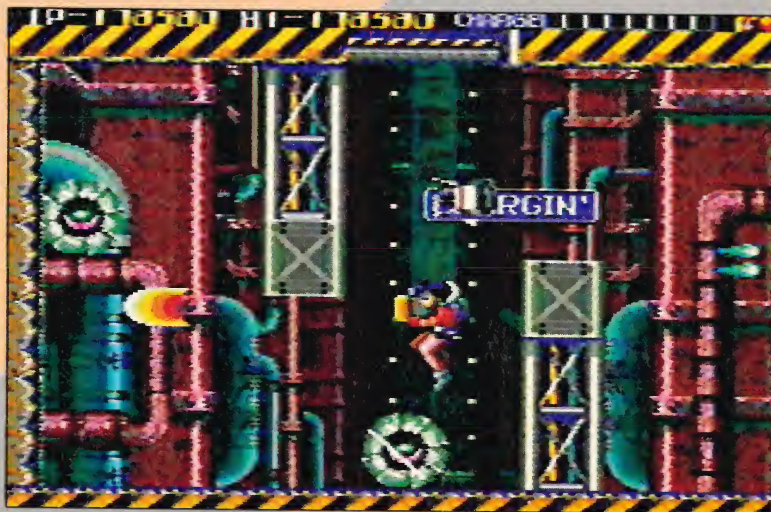
PRO TIP



On the second level you can blast the saw blades before they cut you in half. Also, don't press START when you get Game Over. If you wait a while, you'll get a continue option.



When you finish the level, this kind lady will let you into her garage where you can buy new weapons.



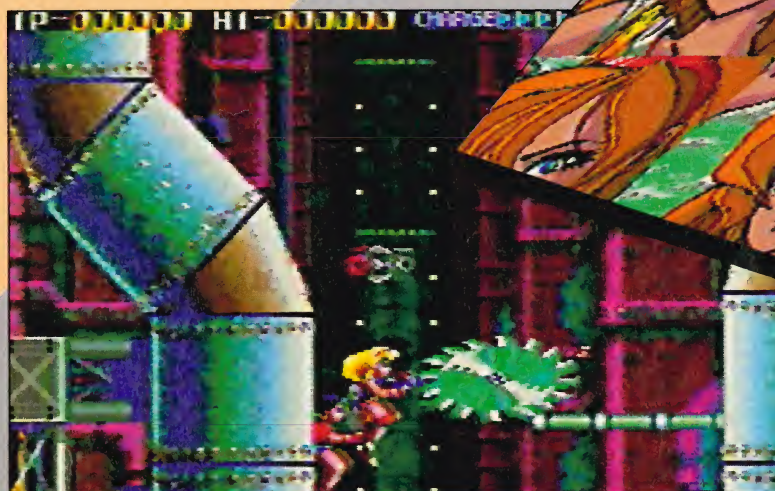
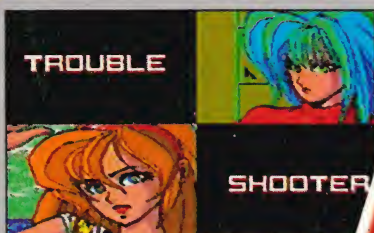
Your super weapon is still charging up to wreak havoc on the enemy. This is the end of the second level and these balls fire off lasers that bounce off the walls. Hide in the corners when you can to avoid them.





TROUBLE

SHOOTER



As you descend into the sewers, the going gets a little tougher. Here the buzz-saws try to cut off more than your communications. Between them, Madison and her partner Crystal should be more than a match for them.

PROFILE	TROUBLE SHOOTER ● VIC TOKAI ● £35 ● IMPORT			
	CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	
	PLAYERS	1	Kingbit Games	
	STAGES	6	The James Thin Building	
	SKILL LEVELS	3	57 George Street	
	FEATURES	n/a	Edinburgh	
			EH2 2JQ	
			(031) 2257682	

sprites and pick-ups are also well-coloured, ensuring the screen never gets too confusing. Similarly there's much detail packed into the colourful backgrounds. Gameplay is also like *Forgotten Worlds*; very monotonous. It is possible to pick-up extras like energy as you travel through the level, but mainly you are restricted to the weapon you chose to use at the beginning of the level. The only variation of this tedious gameplay is the odd change from horizontal to vertical scrolling – just like *Forgotten Worlds*. Even a simple two-player mode would have been welcome, but this is sadly missing.

While the graphics, sound and presentation are undoubtedly an improvement on the much-mentioned Capcom shoot-em-up, *Trouble Shooter* lacks the one thing that made *Forgotten Worlds* fun, the extensive power-ups. It looks great but there's not enough variation to keep you hooked for ages.

● Les "trouble maker" Ellis

PROTALK

This game has great graphics with a lot of detail put into the backgrounds. There's also a great track to go along with it, and loads of special effects. This is the first game I've played with an all-female cast, and I like it! It's great.



Name: Barry Main
 From: Armadale, West Lothian
 Age: 15
 Machines: MD, MS and GG
 Fave games: EA Hockey (MD), Rastan Saga (MS), Lucky Dime Caper (GG)

● Special thanks to Barry for sending us the *Trouble Shooter* cartridge. If you think you've got a game ahead of the SegaPros, then give Les a ring on (0225) 765086 and you too could be reviewing your game for SEGAPRO.

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Excellent static screens and presentation.
- ▼ Superb sprites with much detail and colour.

85

SOUND

- ▲ Tons and tons of varying sound effects.
- ▼ In-game music gets drowned by firing effects.

70

GAMEPLAY

- ▼ No two-player mode!
- ▼ Content is old and over-used.

71

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Tough and frustrating initially.
- ▼ Enemy waves never change.

78

A rehash of *Forgotten Worlds* without all the great power-ups.

PROSCORE **73**

Turbo Out Run is the latest addition to the ever-growing stable of *Out Run* games. In this particular version, you have to race across America, from New York to Los Angeles, hitting checkpoints along the way, in such fair cities as Oklahoma and Chicago.

The obligatory Ferrari is now kitted out with a rather splendid turbo. This enables the driver to reach speeds in excess of light, thus appearing simultaneously at every point in the Universe!

Slight exaggeration there, but it does accelerate the car a heck of a lot faster when it's engaged.

A time limit is imposed on every checkpoint, necessary otherwise you'd just have a mellow cruise across the States. No, it's pedal to the metal all the way, making it a race against the clock and a possible night in the cells because the whole route is lined with the fuzz!

Any car game released now has a hell of a standard to come up to. There are loads of great racing games on Mega Drive, from *Hard Drivin'* to *Super Monaco GP*, *F-1 GP* to *Super Off Road*. *Turbo Out Run*, unlike its predecessor *Out Run*, just doesn't quite hit the mark though.

The graphics are very similar to all the previous versions, big and colourful, and exceptionally fast moving. Your car is well-animated, especially the flame bursting from the exhaust pipes when turbo is engaged.

The blue skyscraper backdrop moves left and right in the distance as the road undulates switchback-style. Red and white barrels litter the road in large numbers and must be avoided.



You've just zoomed through Pittsburgh in the time indicated. The small explosion in the boot of your car is nothing to worry about, it's just the turbo kicking in. There's a clear road ahead of you and just 17 stages to complete. Go to it!

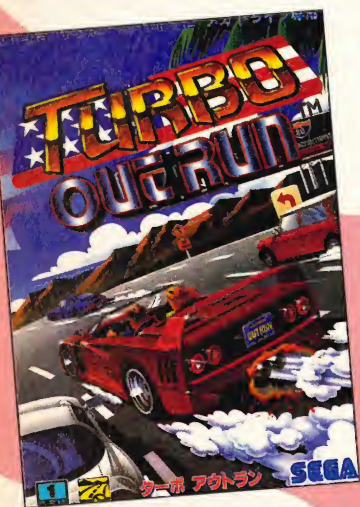
TURBO OUT RUN™

The other road-users come in many varieties. There are sports coupes, large lorries, and what seem to be 2CVs, all of which are, rather obviously, far slower than you.

Sound isn't too bad. The engine revs passably, and the skid and collision sounds are quite realistic. There's also a cop-car siren, enabling you to hear him before you see him.

Gearing can be manual or automatic, but as usual, stick with auto to begin with, and once you're more confident, then go onto manual.

In-car instruments include a speedo, tachometer, gearshifter (which moves forward and backward for high and low, irrespective of whether you choose manual or auto),



Our ProReview version of *Turbo Out Run* was gleaned from that far off Eastern country known as Japan. But it makes no difference as you don't need to know any Japanese to play it. (Just be grateful you aren't racing in a Nissan Micra!) We got our copy from those Nissan owners at Console Concepts, The Village, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1QB. Tel: (0782) 712759. £34 is their asking price.





PROTALK

"The graphics are really smart. The flames coming out of the back of the car when I pressed turbo were my favourite. The engine noise is cool too. A fast, fun addition to the *Out Run* collection, although it's not very original."



Name: SIMON BARBER
From: TROWBRIDGE
Age: 8
Fave game: GHOULS AND GHOSTS
Machine owned: MS



PROTIP

Save your turbos for long straights. Using them on bends will inevitably send you skidding into an off-road hazard, losing valuable time.

GRAPHICS

- ▲ Fast, flicker-free movement.
- ▼ Lack of background detail

75

SOUND

- ▲ Fast, flicker-free movement.
- ▼ Lack of background detail

74

GAMEPLAY

- ▲ Fast reactions needed for the bends.
- ▼ Soon induces driving fatigue

78

CHALLENGE

- ▲ Fast reactions needed for the bends.
- ▼ Soon induces driving fatigue

79

The next *Out Run* game will need more than this to impress.

PROSCORE

77

and a turbo warning indicator. (Wot no CD player?) The turbo can be accessed as often as you like, up to a point. Too much too soon results in your engine overheating, thus disabling the turbo and slowing you right down till you've cooled off.

Also shown, at the top of your windscreen, are the time remaining, your score, and fastest lap time. These are all well-positioned and easily referenced without you running the risk of losing total control of your motor.

Turbo Out Run is quite good fun to play initially, but soon degenerates into just another dodge-the-oncoming-car game. It's not a lack of speed or playability that makes me say this, it's just that we've all seen too many of this type of game. There's a distinct lack of originality here, and if you've already got a fairly good driv-

ing game then stick with it. And even if you haven't, there are games around with far more bells and whistles than this simple affair. I for one am very disappointed by *Turbo Out Run*.

● James "blow out" Scullion

Top: you've just blown your enging from using the turbo at the wrong moment.

Middle: a puff of flame as you turn on the turbo.

Above: the course map shows how far you reached.

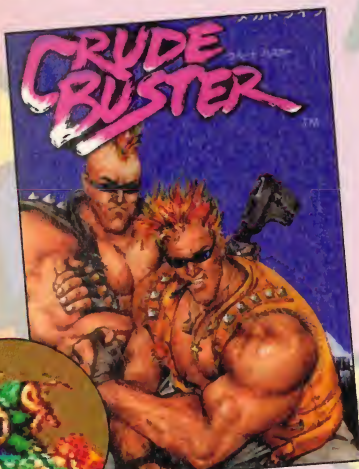
PROFILE	TURBO OUT RUN ● SEGA ● £39.99 ● OUT JUNE			
	CART SIZE	4Mbit	SUPPLIER	
	PLAYERS	1	Sega UK	
	STAGES	20	16 Portland Road	
	SKILL LEVELS	1	London	
	FEATURES	n/a	W11 4LA	
			☎ (071) 7278070	



The time is 2010. Judgement day has arrived. A nuclear explosion has brought New York to its knees. That plutonium beneath the Statue of Liberty went up and took the core of the Big Apple with it.

20 years on the residents of New York and a few outside organisations start to rebuild the once proud city. However, a twisted scientist is conducting experiments and turning people into mutants. He must be stopped before this mutant army overrun the city. The President of America calls a crisis meeting and asks for two volunteers to enter the city and attack the strangely named Big Valley mutant army.

Enter stage left, the two baddest tough guys around, enter Crude and Buster.



Two Crude Dudes (known as Crude Buster in Japan) in the arcades was certainly one of the craziest coin-ops around, so a console version was always expected and eagerly awaited.

With a title like *Two Crude Dudes* you would hardly expect this to be the most serious game around, and the graphics superbly portray the cumbersome warriors as they stumble their way through the ruins of New York.

The two main characters are more than your average super heroes. Muscles like Schwarzenegger and the dress sense to match. No designer suits here, only rugged casual body armour. With all the moves that they can execute, these guys are fun to watch in action, but how come their shades never get broken?

Some of the back-grounds are a little plain, but you don't get a lot of time to stop and admire the scenery as the enemy attack from all directions.

The music is a near copy of the arcade tune and it thumps away in the background as you do the same to the Big Valley mutants.



The sound effects are extra crunchy as you bash and smash your way through the mutant infested levels – I don't know exactly what noise would be made if you picked up a



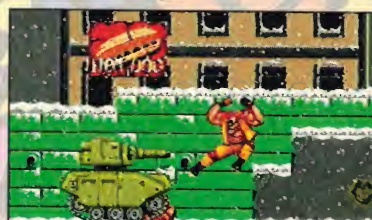
car and threw it at a mutant but I imagine this is pretty close. Excellent effects and music add to the sense of fun in this off-beat game.

A lot of beat-'em-ups suffer from very repetitive gameplay, punch, kick and yawn. *Two Crude Dudes* is a lot different. When you get bored with hitting your opponents, you can always pick them up and swing them around a bit before chucking them against a wall. Or maybe you could pick up a car and throw it at them for a laugh. Little touches like this add so much to the longevity of a game, especially one that isn't exactly packed with loads of levels.

Two Crude Dudes is an ultra accurate coin-op conversion. It translates the action as well as the sense of fun, making *Two Crude Dudes* the *Streets of Rage* for 1992.

● Les "Crude" Ellis

TWO CRUDE DUDES

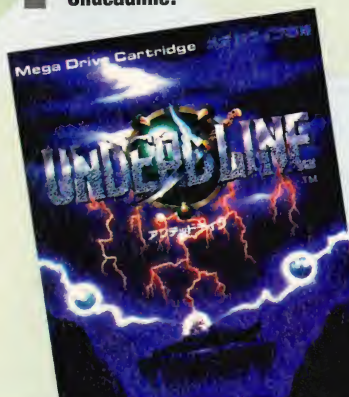


PROFILE	TWO CRUDE DUDES	DATA EAST	£36	IMPORT
CART SIZE	4Mbit			
PLAYERS	2			
STAGES	6			
SKILL LEVELS	3			
FEATURES	teampay			
		SUPPLIER		
		Console Concepts		
		The Village		
		Newcastle-under-Lyme		
		Staffordshire		
		ST5 1QB		
		£ (0782) 712759		

GRAPHICS	90
▲ Big, bold sprites look great.	
▲ Everything is larger than life.	
SOUND	87
▲ Well 'ard effects as you crash along.	
▲ Neat music plays throughout; crank it up!	
GAMEPLAY	94
▲ Simple concept proves successful yet again.	
▲ Comes into its own in two-player mode.	
CHALLENGE	92
▲ Loads of mutants and long levels.	
▲ Even two-player mode is tough.	
Move over <i>Streets of Rage</i> , <i>Two Crude Dudes</i> are kicking ass tonight!	
PROSCORE	91

When some-one says "Undead" to you, you instantly think of George A Romero and such distasteful films as *Zombie Flesh Eaters* and *Night of the Living Dead* that you used to watch when your parents were out.

Plot in Pal Soft's *Undeadline* is inconsequential (as with many horror B-movies). Basically it's a blood-letting free-for-all where you take the part of a heroic fighter intent on slaying every undead creature over six decaying levels. At the end of each stage is a serious bad dude who will attempt to stop you in your tracks. Yes, I know, you've heard it all before, but you've never played anything like *Undeadline*.



UNDEADLINE

Absolutely massive, big, really big, humungous, gargantuan. No, I'm not talking about my ego, these are terms which just manage to describe the guardians in this latest shoot-'em-up. When I say full screen, I don't just mean a puny little blob or human warrior, we are talking serious demonic presence. When you walk away from



PRO TIP The best weapon to use is the crossed swords. Once powered up, it can protect you from all directions which is essential in a free-for-all massacre.

Undeadline, it's the guardians you remember above all. (My favourite was the fire creature that ripped itself from a sheet of flame to fry your brain.)

Undeadline looks and plays like a coin-op; that is to say the graphics are exemplary and the difficulty is set so hard that you have to keep plugging the credits in. A moody blue static depicting a great battle is your first glimpse of the game and this really sets the tone for multi-level carnage on a grand scale.

Your character is well-animated but he is vastly improved when equipped with the host of weapons and magic on offer. The seven weapons are varied and look great; I loved the power-upped fire icon which gives you a deadly stream of napalm that wipes out everything in sight.

The options are good but there are no continues which may have evened up the odds somewhat. I also liked the variety of locations, such as a cemetery, a volcano and down the drains improved the atmosphere and gave *Undeadline* a distinct flavour of the unexpected. As well as the formidable

guardians there are lorry loads of enemies to slash and most are minutely detailed such as the skeletons and ghosts.

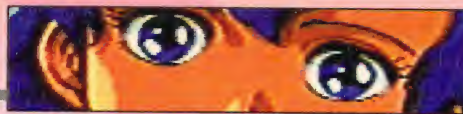
The sound is dramatic and an appropriate tune befits each level. For example, in the caves it is full of echoes and drips of water. The game play suffers from an attack of the dramatics as well, with huge thunderstorms taking place and earthquakes rocking the foundations. Unfortunately, *Undeadline* suffers from some bad collisions and when you only have three hits per life and so many opponents it is incredibly frustrating. But above all, *Undeadline* is a tremendous challenge, and I can't complain at that.

● Damian "dead" Butt

PROFILE	UNDEADLINE	PALSOFT	£38	IMPORT
CART SIZE	6Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	6			
SKILL LEVELS	3			
FEATURES	n/a			
		SUPPLIER		
		Console Concepts		
		The Village		
		Newcastle-under-Lyme		
		Staffordshire		
		ST5 1QB		
		(0782) 712759		

GRAPHICS	94
▲ Mind-blowing levels and guardians.	
▲ Everything looks like a coin-op.	
SOUND	81
▲ Atmospheric and eerie tunes throughout.	
▲ What explosions should sound like.	
GAMEPLAY	80
▲ More carnage than a disaster movie.	
▼ High difficulty may be a frustrating.	
CHALLENGE	85
▲ No doubt about it's long-term play.	
▼ You may find it too difficult.	
A dazzling release with eye-zapping graphics and great challenge.	
PROSCORE	84





Faster than a speeding bullet, more deadly than Les Ellis after being woken up early, the Valis sword has saved the day on many occasions.

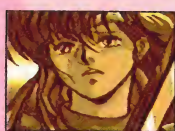
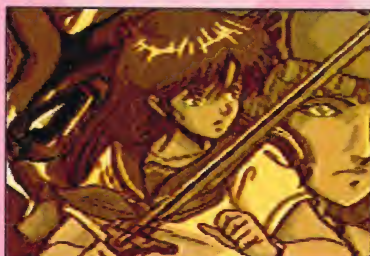
Presently, the holder of the legendary skewer is Yuko Ahso, daughter of the deceased Queen Valia. After her mother's death, the young warrior has decided to restore peace to Dreamland and fend off the impending invasion from the Dark World. To help her in her quest, Yuko has enlisted the help of her sister and current Queen of Dreamland, Valna. Also helping the siblings is Cham, whose history is quite shady.

Cham claims to have been born of the Dark World. However, her father was killed after he protested to King Glames, ruler of the Dark World, about his plan to invade Dreamland. After an initial attempt to steal Yuko's Valis sword, they have now bonded together to defeat the common enemy, Glames.

Personally, I wouldn't trust the girl...



Valis III certainly looks good right from the start. The extraordinary static and animated screens are second to none – even putting *El Viento* to shame. As with all highly involved Japanese mythology tales, *Valis III* has a complicated



plot which is awkwardly described using melt-in-the-mouth graphics and reams of text.

The main character is slightly jerky and hesitant in some of her moves; the pits are unforgivingly precise, requiring pin-point accuracy to negotiate, and I was dismayed to find myself transported right to the start of the level when I died. This is a feature I especially hated, but I could sympathize if this was to compensate for short levels. On the contrary, however, *Valis III* is huge, the levels span many screens and can be frustratingly hard. For mission impossible fanatics, though, *Valis* should prove quite a challenge, with many long and varied levels containing some well-defined monsters and surroundings.

There are good points in there, too. I enjoyed fighting the bull's-head creature, the slug-spitting blob and the shimmering dragon because they represented some of the more original foes in the adventure. The way each guardian employed many different weapons, such as saw blades and fire, made conquering them highly rewarding. I was, however, plagued by an attack of the cling-on monsters, which means an unfair loss of life. The magic was also difficult to invoke and fairly

PROTIP Use Cham on the ferry as her whip makes short work of the dragon and lizard henchmen. Also, try to get a few magical hits on the dragon and shoot the rings he fires to avoid harm. Don't pay the ferryman!



weedy when it finally arrived.

The involved plot takes some understanding, but it fits in with the action perfectly. Innovative ideas such as the dopelganger ferryman, the ringing of the three bells and leaping off a skyscraper to catch the Valis sword are refreshingly different, as is the swapping of control characters.

One of *Valis III*'s strongest assets is the way you never know what is happening next. All too often with this genre, you can predict all the guardians and run-of-the-mill zones to explore, with *Valis III* I was actually



Yuko has successfully rung the bells of justice, now she must ascend the clouds to save dreamland. The old geezer to the left spouts mystical rubbish so it's best to ignore him. This level is particularly tricky because you are besieged by spinning coins (right) and ravenous devil dogs. You will also meet a couple of old friends. One of *Valis III*'s flaws is to be found at the summit of this ramp. Knights attack from all sides and it is totally impossible to survive – still, you've got to laugh.

VALIS III ● TELENET ● £44.99 ● OUT FEB

CART SIZE 8Mbit
PLAYERS 1
STAGES 3
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES n/a

SUPPLIER
Ubi Soft
Saddlers Road
100 Reading Road
Yately, Camberley
Surrey GU17 7RX
© (0252) 860299



VALIS III



Get a face full of this, our heroine is only on the first level and already she is confronted with a suspect character in a cloak. She better have her wits about her because this mother uses circular saw blades to slice opponents in two, and this ball and chain isn't for laughs. The best tactic is to lie low, deflect the blades and keep hitting him - eventually it's curtains and you can continue on your epic quest to pastures new, enemies bold, territories uncharted.

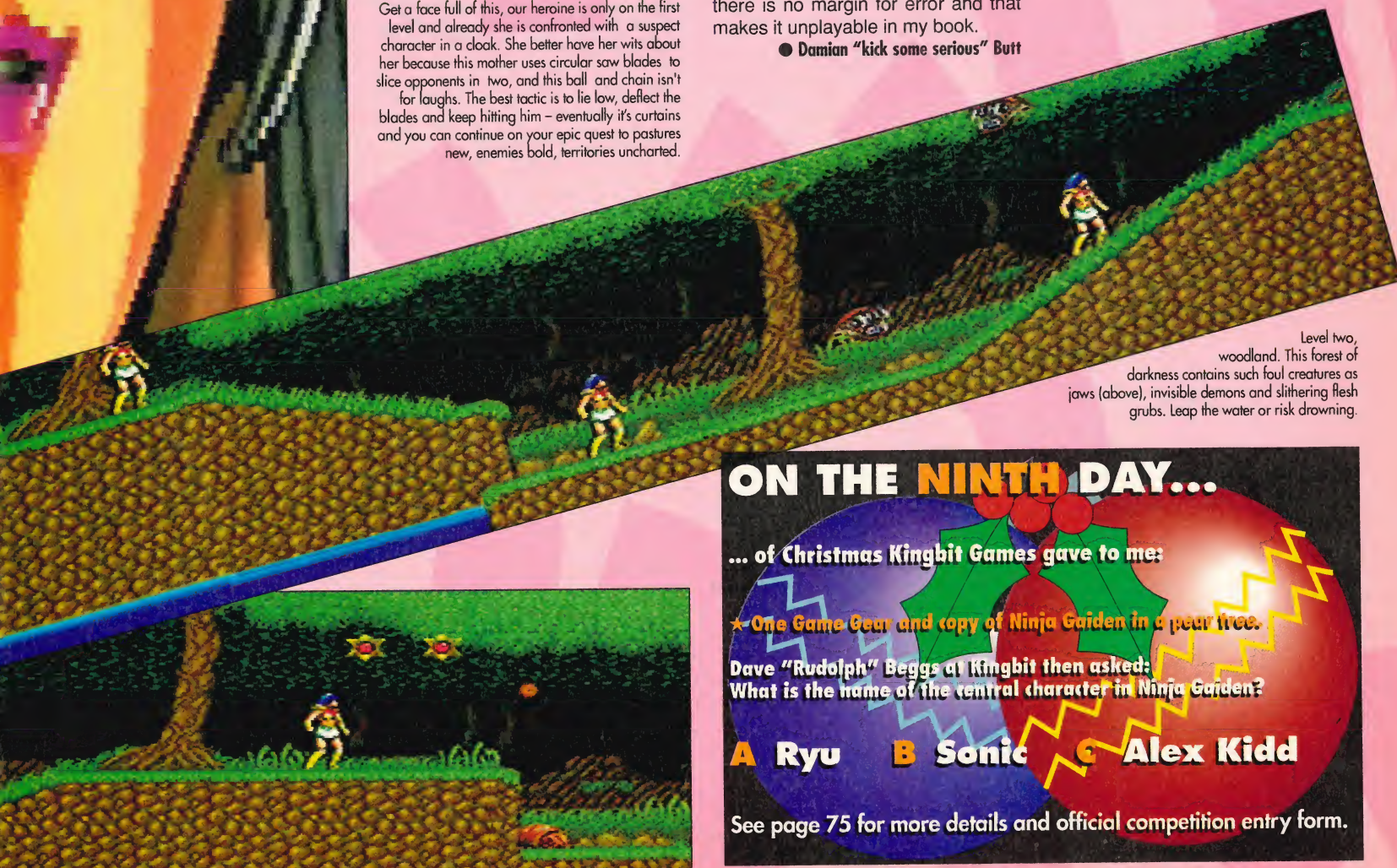
surprised by certain events and this gave me a fresh perspective.

There is also a whopping soundtrack that is truly amazing; the Japanese seem to have a knack for creating mood music and raw energised electric noise. Each level has a long sonic accompaniment which is barely complemented by actual SFX. The noises in *Valis III* are sadly restricted to a metallic swipe of the Valis sword and a pathetic crunch as all enemies are sliced in two.

With exemplary static screens and tunes, *Valis III* tries to compete in the ProYo! stadium but fails miserably due to its frustrating difficulty and too precise control method. In this game, there is no margin for error and that makes it unplayable in my book.

● Damian "kick some serious" Butt

GRAPHICS	91
▲ A sign of the CD times.	
▲ Detailed, original and exhaustive settings.	
SOUND	78
▲ Astounding tunes will blow you away.	
▼ Hardly any satisfactory effects.	
GAMEPLAY	76
▲ Early levels are exciting to explore.	
▼ Too precise and subsequently frustrating.	
CHALLENGE	85
▲ Easy to get engrossed in the adventure.	
▲ Some goons are very unfair.	
Lacks the edge-of-the-seat gameplay that made <i>El Viento</i> such a winner.	
PROSCORE	79



Level two, woodland. This forest of darkness contains such foul creatures as jaws (above), invisible demons and slithering flesh grubs. Leap the water or risk drowning.

ON THE NINTH DAY...

... of Christmas Kingbit Games gave to me:

★ One Game Gear and copy of *Ninja Gaiden* in a pear tree.

Dave "Rudolph" Beggs at Kingbit then asked:
What is the name of the central character in *Ninja Gaiden*?

A Ryu **B** Sonic **C** Alex Kidd

See page 75 for more details and official competition entry form.

Whilst Brian the Viking Child was out collecting herbs in the forest one day for his master Herman the Herbalist, his home village was unexpectedly sucked up into the centre of a massive whirlwind. What a shock awaited the poor lad as he returned home. To top it all, Odin, father of all the gods, appeared and told Brian that for centuries before his birth it was foretold that he was the hero destined to enter the Hallways of Valhalla, and that he would vanquish the Evil God of Fire, Strife and Mischief. What a day Brian was having!

The icing on the cake was the news that before Brian could reach Valhalla, he would have to battle his way through the hordes of Loki's evil apprentices. The continued existence of life on Earth was in Brian's hands, and all he wanted was his mummy!



Still stuck on level one? Hey, kid, you must have some kind of "problem". Now jump that crevasse, defeat that evil ogre and get on with your journey. You gotta problem with that?



Check out those neat backgrounds. This is level two and it's here that you start to realise what an immense task lies ahead of you.



The Viking Child

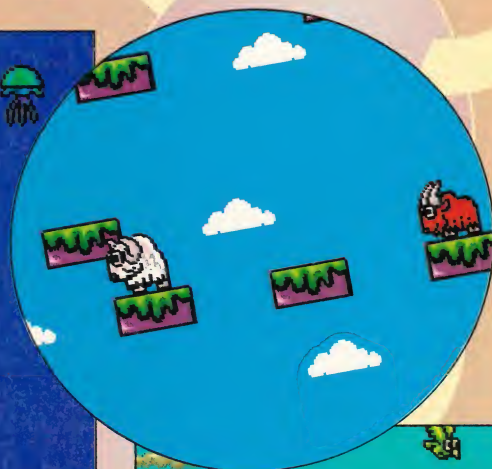


You may not believe it, but these shots are 100% Game Gear through and through. If the Game Gear were displaying its pictures on a high-quality monitor, this is what you'd get. Now don't you wish there was a GG convertor for the Master System?



Very early on in the game you will encounter this tree. Do not try climbing, despite its most climbable appearance.

PROTIP Keep stocked up on health, otherwise you won't even notice your



All self-respecting travellers should certainly try out the local shop. Here you'll find everything for that weekend trip, sir.



Mmm, you're progressing well now. This is level four, and by now you should have met 90% of the problems you are likely to encounter. *Viking Child* is the first in the *Prophecy* series, and should be followed by another game early next year, and a Master System version this Christmas.

Viking Child begins with a fantastic panoramic sweep of Brian's home island. The longboats sit in the harbour, awaiting the day they sail off in search of foreign lands to rape, loot and pillage! The colourful graphics jump out at you, and set the scene for the adventures to come. Odin appears over his realm next, and marks the spot for you to begin your tortuous quest. A quick flash from the father of the gods, and you're thrown in at the

around – they attack as soon as they sight you. No need for complex patterns, they just want you dead! The backdrops are pretty spiffing too, with tumbledown houses overshadowed by mighty redwoods.

Soundwise, we're talking rave on! The 18 smiladelic tunes playing constantly throughout could even put a grin on Les's face! Of sound FX there are none, but they'd be drowned out by the tune anyway, so what's the beef?

The fjords are large and complicated, but the occasional lift aids your progress, as do the shops scattered about the land, in which you can buy extra health and weapons. Each of the eight levels is guarded by a horrendous(ly cute!) monstrosity, the final one being Loki himself. They're a real bitch to kill, too, and will have you screaming in frustration when you die just before they were going to!

Imagitec are hoping *Prophecy 1: The Viking Child* is just the first in a long series of Viking Child adventures, with two more already in development. I really hope they continue as this will keep Game Gear players enthralled for ages.

● James "I'm a lumberjack!" Scullion

PROFILE	THE VIKING CHILD	GAMETEK	£TBA	OUT OCT
CART SIZE	2Mbit			
PLAYERS	1			
STAGES	8			
SKILL LEVELS	1			
FEATURES	dead parrots			

deep end. The gameplay is something akin to the *Wonder Boy* series, and reprises those old classics perfectly.

Graphically, *Viking Child* is a cutesy-platformer's dream. The main sprite is a particularly jovial chap considering his lot in life. He swaggers along, smiling all the while, as his sword flashes out to despatch Loki's henchmen back to their foul domain. These guys don't mess

GRAPHICS	82
▲ Cute to the bone.	
▲ Geographically accurate scenery.	
SOUND	78
▲ Pleasant background tunes.	
▲ No sound FX.	
GAMEPLAY	85
▲ Much better than <i>Wonder Boy</i> .	
▲ Great play areas to explore.	
CHALLENGE	86
▲ Health runs away like sand through your hands.	
▲ Enemies are real pigs to kill!	

Brian's screen debut is a successful start to the *Prophecy* series.

PROSCORE 84

Take a step forward into the future. Past the holocaust and to an Earth which is now peaceful, its inhabitants sick with the battles that raged for centuries. But now trouble is starting to brew again. An outside force is rumoured to be planning an offensive against Earth, hoping to capitalise on its peaceful people. Unfortunately, by the time news of the attack had reached the global capital, the invaders had already left 90% of the planet in their wake. Nations are crumbling beneath this mighty empire, and only the world's capital remains.

Based within its walls is a bunker containing the world's three most advanced fighters: Silph, Valkyrie and Seylen. As the last remaining pilot in the air force, you are given these three planes to use in an attempt to save the planet. The operation behind this, codenamed "vapor trail", requires you to take out both the air and land enemy vehicles, so you'll need all your wits about you.

Wap! Right from the start, *Vapor Trail* hits you smack between the eyes with its gorgeous still graphics and neat speech samples. The slick presentation is continued with the plane selection taking place in a hanger, rather than the normal flick

PRO TIP At the end of level one, you'll encounter a massive (compared to your little plane) helicopter gunship. Don't take any hassle from it, just napalm those gun turrets and then concentrate your fire on the central section.



Early in level three you encounter armoured trains. Only by activating your super sonic spin (sounds familiar, eh?) can you defeat large enemy craft that appear. Use the spin sparingly as it takes a long time to recharge.



Vapor Trail originated in Japan, where it is now about five months old. You can get the Japanese version, which includes all those weird Jap instructions, from those purveyors of Mega Drive games at Console Concepts, 223b Waterloo Road, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2HS. Tel: (0782) 712759. Their extra special, ever-so-cheap version retails for just £35.

level, while another has a menacing gunship towering ominously over the terrain.

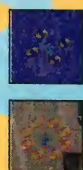
Play is accompanied by a large array of excellent tunes. Effects are exhilarating and really push the speakers. The speech, which simulates radio chatter, is very effective.

Ultimately, playability is where *Vapor Trail* excels. The difficulty is challenging, but your task never



Pick up the diversifier icon pictured to the left and your ship will become armed with pulsating

rings. Collect the power-up icon a second time and you double the ship's fire power. Get the icon a third time and you'll have an almost unbeatable ship.

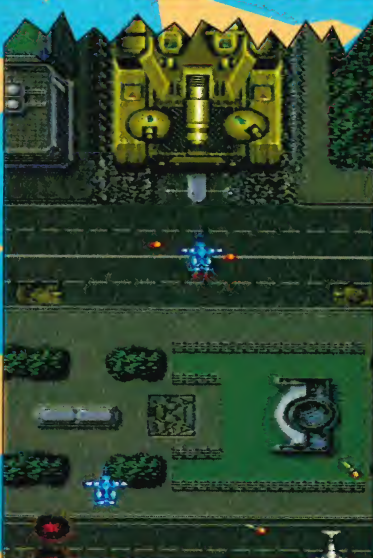


VAPOR TRAIL



screen mode.

Unfortunately, this is where the originality stops. All the sprites, albeit of a high standard, will be very familiar to shoot-'em-up fans. Luckily, the huge helicopters and so on at the end of stages are well done. For instance, there are some huge tyre tracks leading up to a tank on one



seems impossible. Also, nice touches like having to choose a different ship when you die add atmosphere and make *Vapor Trail* innovative.

● Damian Butt

PROFILE	VAPOR TRAIL ● RENOVATION ● £44.99 ● OUT OCT
CART SIZE	4Mbit
PLAYERS	2
STAGES	6
SKILL LEVELS	2
FEATURES	team play
	SUPPLIER
	Ubi Soft,
	Saddlers House
	100 Reading Road
	Yateley, Camberley
	Surrey GU17 7RX
	(0252) 860299

GRAPHICS	79
▼ Unimaginative sprites for enemy forces.	
▲ Colourful guardians and level backdrops.	
SOUND	82
▼ Lack of variety in sound effects.	
▲ Superb fighting sounds complement the action.	
GAMEPLAY	70
▼ Average shoot-'em-up action with few frills.	
▲ Stages vary in length.	
CHALLENGE	78
▼ Far too easy with two players.	
▲ Successful mix of easy and difficult sections.	
Adds nothing to the genre as a whole, but provides addictive challenge for one player.	
PROSCORE	75

In medieval times, the legendary sword, Warsong, said to give its owner unlimited power over his adversaries, was handed down from one ambitious ruler to the next.

Over the ages, many an evil lord sought out this great weapon and much blood was shed in the struggle for its ownership. Therefore, the wise King Alfador decreed that its might be contained deep within the walls of Castle Baltia, lest its power be harnessed against the common good.

Far away, across the seas, the evil Lizard Emperor, Python, informed by an elemental of the sword's whereabouts, sat plotting his dark conquest.

Ordered by their Lord, his army came; the denizens of the underworld. Their purpose, to raze Baltia to the ground and to claim the mystical Warsong.



Tackling Warsong seemed at first to be a daunting challenge (as fraught with danger as consuming a Ginster's Cornish Pasty and surviving!), but proved to be a far more pleasant experience than I imagined.

The moody intro scene shows the evil Python bombarding a castle with what seems to be ball-lightning, behind him a mad psychedelic purple haze befits his character. A stirring soundtrack, reminiscent of those film war epics of the Fifties, kicks in, and adds greatly to the realism.

PROTIP The archers are the most expensive battalion to run, but are by far the most effective. So buy, buy, buy them arrers, guv'nor!

From the save/restart screen you are transported to the prologue, informing you of your mission details in the form of a cartoon storyboard, and also giving you the first peek at the map.

This consists of a grid-like playing area in which you prove your manhood, or lack of it. Your first mission is to win Prince Garrett's escape or perish miserably, crying "Sorry Father, I have failed you!". Sadly, you will encounter these fateful words many times.

You and the computer opponent alternate at moving your pieces

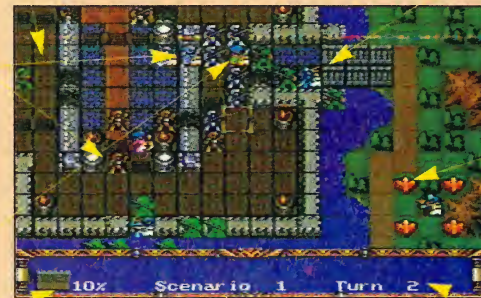


Each one of these squares is a single move of which each character has a limited amount.

This is the drawbridge. One of the two exits Garrett must reach, but use the other.

These are some of the independently-acting warriors who will do their best to help you in your mission.

Here's Garrett. He must stay alive or else.



Watch out for these Elementals. They're extremely tough to kill and will head straight for Garrett.

This box tells you what percentage of the scenario you've completed.

There are numerous scenarios. This is only the first and it ain't easy.

This tells you how many moves you've taken.

PROFILE	WARSONG ● TRECO ● £39.95 ● IMPORT			SUPPLIER	
	CART SIZE	8Mbit		KC's Console & Computer Magic	
	PLAYERS	1		3 High Street	
	STAGES	3		Loughborough	
	SKILL LEVELS	1		Leicestershire LE11 1PY	
	FEATURES	back-up		(0509) 211799	

around the map, but each character can only perform one move per turn, making each and every move of vital importance to your strategy.

At the end of each move the picture transforms into a battle screen. This was my favourite part of the game as you can sit back and watch either your troops destroying their adversaries, or the enemy decimating the good guys, with extremely convincing screams and clashes of swords.

Adding to this is the music which, as the enemy take their turns, becomes rather more menacing, creating fear and loathing in even the hardest player's heart.

Having played relatively few games of this style and despite my anticipated boredom, I came away rather pleased with Warsong and although I never really got to grips with many of the intricacies of the gameplay I do feel that this is a much ignored style of game, and shouldn't be.

● James "Melody Maker" Scullion

WARSONG



Left: Let's get hyped up! Here the warring factions eye each other up before engaging in a bloodbath of epic proportions.

Right: This is the screen where mortality rates are worked out. On the left we see Python astride his mighty slug, whilst on the right are your army. (Sadly, being slaughtered by the Evil One's superior armament.)



PROTIP If your commanders are running out of energy, keep them static for a move. This will build it back up again.

GRAPHICS	81
▲ Battles are well choreographed.	
▲ Great things come in small packages.	
SOUND	80
▲ Periodic music sets the scene.	
▲ In-battle SFX are cool.	
GAMEPLAY	78
▲ Extensively tests your strategy play.	
▲ Surprisingly low on the boredom factor.	
CHALLENGE	85
▲ Python is one evil mutha.	
▲ The enemy are just too good.	

A surprisingly entertaining piece which needs a lot of patience to play.

PROSCORE 80

Carmen Sandiego is a super villain with a difference. First off, she is a woman (and don't get villains of the female variety every day). Secondly she has the ability to send her henchmen through time to steal historical artifacts (another thing you don't see very often). But Carmen isn't interested in collecting them, she just wants to sell them at extortionate prices and throw the world upside down.

The Acme Detective Agency have been employed to track down Carmen and her henchmen before they can rewrite the history books and cause all sorts of time paradoxes. You are the new detective in town and you have been given the job of tracking her down. Of course, trying to track down criminals through time in a Ford Fiesta wouldn't be much use, so the agency have given you the new Chronoskimmer 326i time machine to use. With any luck, finding some of these crims will get you promoted off the bottom run of the ladder.

CARMEN PROFILE

Full name: Carmen Sandiego

Sex: Female

Hair colour: Reddish-brown

Occupation: Former spy for the Intelligence Service of Monaco

Organisation: Brøderbund

Hobby: Tennis

Auto: 1939 Packard convertible

Feature: Never appears in public without her ruby necklace.

Other: Great fondness for Tacos.

Sightings: Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?, Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego?, Where in the USA is Carmen

Sandiego, Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?

Bibliography: World Almanac, Atlas of Europe, Fodor's USA, Desk Encyclopaedia.



When stuff is given away with games, it is normally just a gimmick to make people think they are onto a good deal. With Carmen Sandiego, it's a little different. The encyclopaedia that is bundled with this game is an essential aid to playing the game. It's no mere pamphlet either, this sucker is the size of two normal Mega Drive game boxes and would look good in any boffin's book collection. Electronic Arts obviously haven't scrimped on this one.



Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?

PROFILE	CARMEN SANDIEGO ● SEGA ● £49.99 ● OUT	
	CART SIZE	8 Mbit
	PLAYERS	1
	STAGES	80
	SKILL LEVELS	1
FEATURES		back-up
		SUPPLIER Electronic Arts Langeley Business Centre 11-49 Station Road Langeley, Nr Slough, Berkshire SL3 8YN (0753) 519442





From pre Christianity Mexico to ultra modern London you'll be travelling all over the place in pursuit of Carmen and her henchmen. Use your clues, use your head, use your capture robots to do the really hard work, then back home to the future for tea and Neighbours.



The introduction sequence is brilliant. It sets the atmosphere and makes you feel that you are enrolling on an important detective assignment. A lot of care and attention has been paid to the rest of the graphics. Each historical

location has its own scene and most of these are simply wonderful. They are all bright and colourful, and instantly recognisable as time periods and places.

Each individual location has its own piece of music, which is, of course, perfectly suited to the surroundings. Like the rest of the game, this has obviously been well thought out. There are also a bucket-load of spot effects throughout the game, and none of these could be any better than they are.

tackling this game head on (so long as you can read an encyclopaedia).

The only drawback I can find in Carmen is that the gameplay, although simple, can get a bit repetitive after a while. You seem to spend a lot of time questioning witnesses and informants. In fact you spend most of your time doing it. But that aside, Carmen is a fine game.

There can't be many games around where you actually learn something while you are playing, but this form of "edutainment" deserves to take off, if not for its originality then for EA's courage in launching it. (It's also a great excuse to get a new game: "I'll be learning loads of historical facts while I play, mum. Can I have the 50 quid now?")

The battery backed cart means



Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?

location has its own scene and most of these are simply wonderful. They are all bright and colourful, and instantly recognisable as time periods and places.

While most of the game is statics,



The gameplay is, as they say, simple yet a detective. Gathering evidence and piecing the clues together till you have enough to issue a warrant and nail the suspect couldn't be simpler. The controls are very easy to use, so at any age you shouldn't be afraid of



that you don't have to keep starting from the very beginning every time you turn off the machine and there is a password option if you want to start any assignment with a clean sheet. Both of these options are fast becoming essential in games as they become bigger and more complex.

EA like breaking new ground with their games and Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego? is the latest in a long line of EA smash hits. Carmen is a refreshing change and a shot in the arm for a Mega Drive seemingly drowning under a pile of mindless shoot-'em-ups. Playing this game is an immensely enjoyable and interesting way to spend a few hours – and who could ask for more?

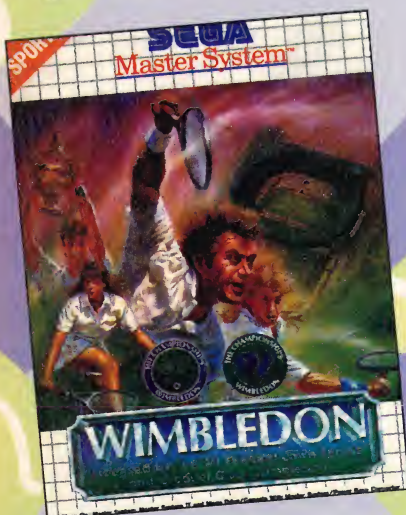
● Les "The Doctor" Ellis

GRAPHICS	85
▲ Beautifully drawn historical scenes.	
▲ Classic introduction sets atmosphere.	
SOUND	90
▲ A multitude of musical delights.	
▲ Loads of original and weird effects	
GAMEPLAY	80
▲ History lessons were never this much fun.	
▲ May get a bit repetitive after a while.	
CHALLENGE	
▲ Many missions to time-travel in.	
▲ Playing against and through time is tough.	
A brave, original, successful attempt at launching the edutainment genre.	
PROSCORE	88

Ahh, Wimbledon. Halcyon days in the searing summer sun, eating strawberries and cream and sipping Champagne, while the World's top tennis players sweat their hearts out on those famous grass courts in an attempt to win the most coveted trophy on the circuit.

Okay, so most people don't actually get the chance to sip on Champs and pick at strawberries, in fact the nearest most of us get to Wimbledon is sitting in the back garden, sucking a shandy ice-pop and eating crisps, whilst watching play on a portable TV.

Oh well, Sega's latest Master System game promises to make your front room centre court and your best friend a ball boy (to get the refreshments!). Complete with TV advertising, *Wimbledon* promises to oust the inimitable (we thought) *Match Point* from its number one ranking.



Sega may be the official suppliers of Wimbledon, but our copy was backhanded to us by Jason "The Lob" Henton of TV Games, 11 Castle Parade, Ewell By-pass, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 2PR. Tel: (081) 7867816

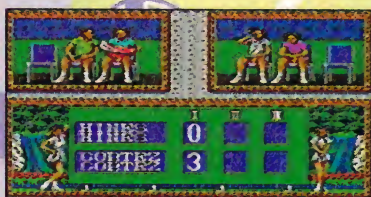


Wimbledon, the game, has been endorsed by the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, and considering the prestige involved here, we wouldn't expect them to put their name to just any old turkey. The front end of this piece of sporting software is indeed professional, with delightfully designed statics of the Wimbledon logo fronting a colourful shot of the centre court.

These fade out to reveal the option screen from which you are presented with two modes of play: free match or tour. A choice of 16 players await you, none of whom figure in the real Wimbledon tournament, each with varying statistical play levels. There are several modes of play, including two humans teamed against the



Right chaps, time for a quick barley water while we peruse that spiffing scoreboard, okay, yah?



computer, player one versus player two, each with a computer player, or a doubles match involving one human player teamed with the com-

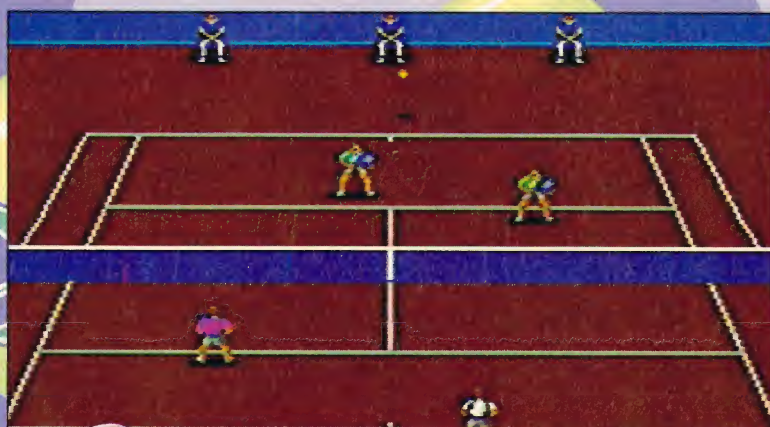


PROTALK

Simple graphics are used for the court, but the actual players move very smoothly. Sound is appalling, with weedy tunes and irritating effects. There are loads of different players, though, and only really experienced players will find it easy. Sadly, there's not enough variety in the gameplay to make this last for too long.



Name: Paul Turner
From: Trowbridge
Age: 14
Machine: Mega Drive
Fave game: EA Hockey



PROFILE

WIMBLEDON ● SEGA ● £34.99 ● OUT NOW

CART SIZE 2Mbit
PLAYERS 2
STAGES 4
SKILL LEVELS 1
FEATURES teamplay, vs, password

SUPPLIER

Sega UK
16 Portland Road
London
W11 4LA
(071) 7278070

SEE YOU ON COURT

There are three main types of court to have a game of tennis on; lawn, hard, and clay. Here's a quick run-down on which to choose, and why!



Playing on lawn reduces the speed of the ball, creating the more sedate kind of tennis, perfectly suited to, say, a laid-back guy like Dom.



The hard court provides a game for players with quick reactions. That's why you'll never see Dave "sharp as a button!" Perry competing on one!



Now clay really brings out the artist in Les, but all he wants to do with it is model it into a bust of Elvira (as opposed to Elvira's bust!).

PRO TIP

If you're having trouble with the speed of Wimbledon, then try playing on the lawn courts.

They're slightly slower – but not much!

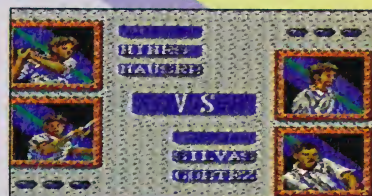
puter versus two CPU players. Of course singles matches are catered for too!

The carefully designed courts come in three styles: hard (concrete), clay and lawn. These are dutifully coloured in the necessary hues, and the ball bounces in accordance with the particular texture you're playing on.

Player animation on the vertically-



viewed court is superb. The sprites having a full range of tennis moves to perform, including smashes, lobs and slices. They also throw a variety of tantrums on losing points, games,



Make sure you pick a sound partner for a spot of doubles, or you'll soon be falling out!

etc, such as kicking the floor, crying and even rolling around the court in the dying fly position. The audience are also alive, waving and clapping at the advent of a good shot. Between games come the stats, and with them a still screen shot of both competitors enjoying a glass of Robinson's Barley Water, then it's back to the action.

The in-game music is unfortunately obligatory, but easily ignored, or alternatively, you could turn it down. However, then you'd miss out on the sound effects too, and they're not half bad, although few in number! Digitised sound of tennis balls being thwacked accompany all the shots in your repertoire, as does their bounce on the court, but sadly that's about it.

Of humungous interest to all you sporting Master System owners is the sheer pace of the game. The guys over on CONSOLE XS have all

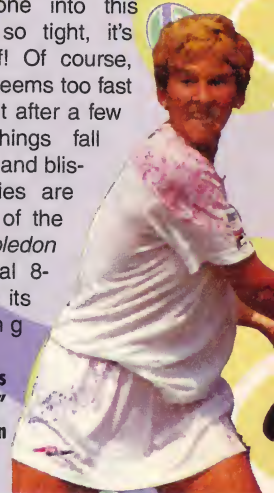
TENNIS GEAR

Eye strain aptly awaits the Game Gear tennis aficionado that attempts to play Wimbledon through the Master Gear converter. The sprites are just too small to allow any real playability, while the ball is barely visible to the naked eye! Still, if you're a MagniGear, and you're a dedicated fan, it could still be worth a look!



been playing a SNES tennis game, and though you may find it hard to believe, in this case the MS has superior graphics as well as faster processing speed (I kid you not!). The sprites fairly fly around the court, slamming the ball cross-court with phenomenal velocity! The screen scrolls to keep up with the action, and does so admirably. The coding gone into this game is so tight, it's waterproof! Of course, initially it seems too fast to play, but after a few games, things fall into place and blistering rallies are the order of the day. Wimbledon is seasonal 8-bit fun at its sporting best!

● James
"chalk dust!"
Scullion



TOP SEEDS

Hello, folks, Mr Smith here, welcoming you to Gardener's Question Time. And first a letter from "concerned" of Bristol. Oh, my mistake, wrong kind of seeds. These guys are supposed to be the top rankers, but check the stats, some are lame, man, *real* lame!



GRAPHICS	84
▲ Highly-animated player sprites.	
▲ Excellent intro and mid-game statics.	
SOUND	65
▲ The two effects are very realistic.	
▲ Pump down the volume!	
GAMEPLAY	89
▲ Totally fast 'n' furious, dudes!	
▲ All it needs is Don Maskell commentating!	
CHALLENGE	94
▲ Very tough, even at the lower levels.	
▲ Quality tennis throughout!	
Tight coding and subsequent speed gains have produced an "ace" game.	
PROSCORE	88

This year sees the return of the Winter Olympics staged in Albertville, France. With the eyes of the world fixed on this monumental occasion, Ballistic are set to rake in a wad of cash from this very timely release.

Personally, I could never see the attraction of hacking down a slope at 60 mph on a couple of pieces of plastic. Call me old fashioned, but if it hasn't got wheels it ain't safe going at that speed. Yet the fools still exist, and with the snow in Europe currently estimated at the best for 45 years, the fans are set to increase.

But Winter Challenge isn't just about skiing, there's skating, bob-sleighting, ski-jumping, cross-country, etc. This is the first time the Mega Drive has seen an olympiad of sports events, so grab your duffel coat a prepare for some cold nights.

Pictured below is the extraordinary opening sequence. The flame is lit and then the doves are triumphantly released.

WINTER

In all of the Ballistic games so far (*Mike Ditka's*, *Star Control*, etc), one thing has been constant: the presentation. The way Ballistic approach everything is very professional. Just one look at the plethora of set-ups in *Winter Challenge* proves this. Beginners wishing to hone their talents can practise on their own, and when they feel good enough, enter the tournament in which up to ten people can par-



Pictured left are, from the top, ski-jumping, biathlon and speed-skating.

ticipate. Although this may seem like very involving, I have to warn you that only one player plays at a time, there's no simultaneous action. As you can imagine, with ten players competing things may get very frustrating – especially on something like the cross-country skiing stage.

On a game like this you would expect the graphics to consist of little more than a white expanse, but Ballistic have avoided this by using subtle shades of blue and off-whites. It all works effectively, and is quite soothing on the eyes. All the events are viewed from just behind the action. This, too, works successfully and gives a real impression of movement and perspective, even if the scrolling is a little jerky. A map for each event displays your position, and this is accurate and detailed.

The main character is very well drawn and actually moves just like the guys on *Ski Sunday* do. One bit

CHALLENGE

DON'T WORRY, SKI HAPPY!



Downhill – Suicidal race downhill with no brakes.



Ski jump – Suicidal jumps at 100 km/h with no safety net.



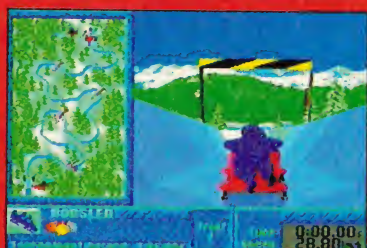
Luge – Suicidal sitting on a baking tray and sliding down a slope.



Speed skating – Suicidal balancing on skates at stupid speed.



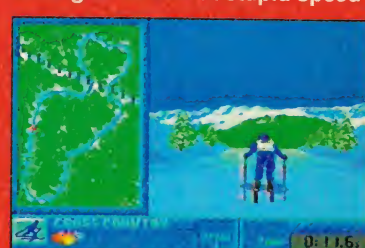
Giant slalom – Suicidal race downhill trying to knock over as many flags as possible.



Bobsled – Suicidal sitting in a dustbin and sliding down a slope.



Biathlon – Suicidal trek across the countryside with a rifle on your back.



Cross-country skiing – Suicidal attempt at hiking while on skis.



Just look at the motely crew you have to choose from. All ten can be played by human players at once.

that particularly impressed me was the way he did little jumps on the downhill race – not essential, but, like the optional “action replays”, it proves that a bit of extra attention has been spent on each event polishing up the presentation.

Only the backdrops let down the graphic area. These are run of the mill, and seem to have been rushed out, especially when compared to some of the excellent static pictures in other parts of the game.

The one tune is not worth dwelling on. It is uninspired and unfit for this type of game. In fact, the snare

drums could have been sampled from crunching a packet of crisps. The effects are a mixed bunch. The speech is a nice touch, but there should have been more of it to liven up the generally boring aural area.

It all sounds too good to be true, doesn't it. Admittedly, the graphics are some of the best on the Mega Drive, but it's when you start to play *Winter Challenge* that things really become difficult. The control method is sluggish, and therefore frustrating, and the overall feeling is not of controlling a sportsman racing at excessive speeds, more like a pensioner

PROFILE	WINTER... ● BALLISTIC ● £39.99 ● OUT FEB
	CART SIZE 6Mbit
	PLAYERS 10
	STAGES 8
	SKILL LEVELS 3
	FEATURES password
	SUPPLIER Accolade Europe Bowling House Point Pleasure Wandsworth London SW18 1PE ☎(081) 8770880

running to catch a bus. This is a real flaw because it not only makes most of the events irritating, but also very long and drawn out. Only the ski-jumping and slalom are worth playing again and again.

With the action replays, high scores saving to cart and a useful password feature, quite a bit of innovation has gone into producing this, but I can't help feeling a real opportunity has been missed here. Full marks to the graphics artist, but a smack round the head with a pair of skis for the programmer who hasn't spent any time at all perfecting the gameplay.

● Les “Tomba The Bomba” Ellis

GRAPHICS ▲ Impressive 3-D routine and presentation. ▼ Jerky animation; disappointing backdrops.	85
SOUND ▲ The odd bit of neat speech ▼ Lousy music needs turning off.	68
GAMEPLAY ▲ Many events; loads of players. ▼ Soon gets very frustratingly boring.	73
CHALLENGE ▲ Multi-player games go on and on. ▲ Passwords allow you to return any time.	80
The idea was sound, but the potential just hasn't been realised.	
PROSCORE 79	

SUPER

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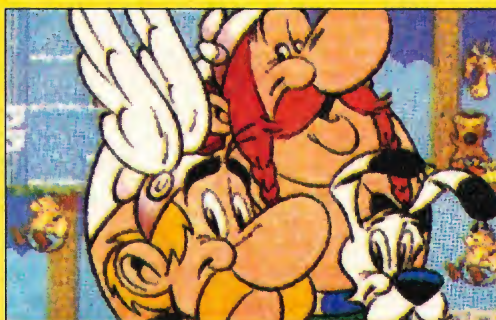
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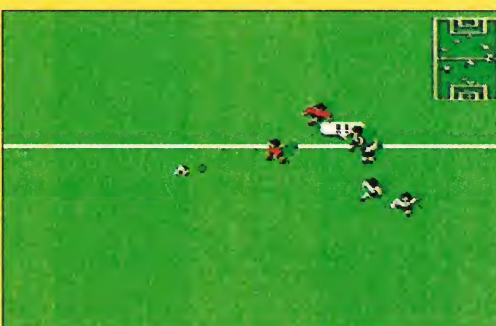
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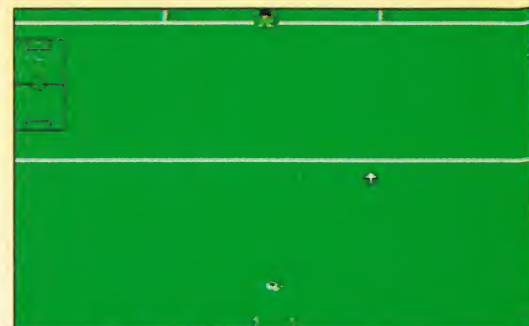
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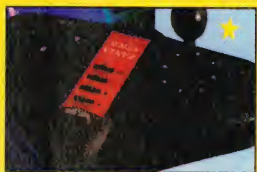
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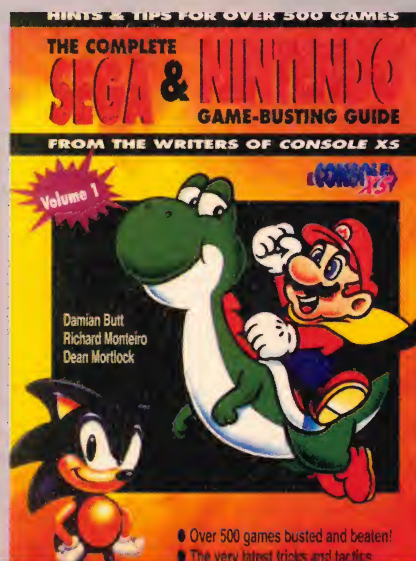
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